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A HISTORY OF DRESS IN THE KAKAMEGA DISTRICT OF WESTERN KENYA: IMPACT OF SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

BY

NANCY OMRONJI OPENDA-OMAR

(C)

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE

STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1993.

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.....
Sandra Niessen, Supervisor

.....
Nancy Kerr

.....
Anne McDougall

Date: Dec 11, 1992

DEDICATION

To

Ishmael Ndula and Lois Nasio.

&

Petero Maloba and Sara Lutta

(my maternal and paternal grandparents).

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to document the changing dress forms worn in Kakamega district from the late nineteenth century to independence in 1963. The study also examined the socio-cultural factors which impacted on dress during the same period. Socio-cultural factors included religion, education, socio-economic status, age, gender, and trade among others. The ethnohistorical approach was used for the study whereby data was collected using the historical method, stylistic and technical analysis of artifacts and photographs, and the ethnographic method in which informants were interviewed on dress worn in the district. The findings showed that dress forms changed over the years according to the socio-cultural context. During the period from the late nineteenth century until 1918, indigenous Baluyia dress forms were worn by the majority of the people. During this period, few people dressed in non-indigenous dress forms in Kakamega district. These included the Nabongo (King), his elders and brothers and those in close contact with persons spreading Christianity and Islam in the area. In 1919, Chief Mulama made a declaration which outlawed the wearing of indigenous dress forms. By 1930 the majority of the people in the district wore tailored dress which originated in other lands. After 1930, fashion changes occurred with increasing rapidity and songs were composed about the popular as well as the not so popular dress styles worn. Dress, however, continued to retain meaning no matter the form it took. During the decade before independence, groups of people rejected 'Western' dress forms as a protest to the colonial occupation of the country, and advocated a return to indigenous dress forms of the late nineteenth century to express their feelings of nationalism. By this time, however, a process of 'cultural authentication' had taken place in dress and the Western dress forms had become part of the indigenous Kenyan culture with indigenous meaning attached to them.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

The purpose of this study is to document the dress forms in Kakamega district in Western Kenya (see Map 1 and 2) from 1883 to 1963, a period of eighty years. The study also examines some of the socio-cultural factors in Kakamega district which influenced changes in dress forms during the same period. The ethnohistorical approach, which is a form of cultural biography drawing upon many kinds of testimony, was used for the study.

Data was gathered in three phases. In the first phase, written documentary data pertaining to dress forms worn in Kakamega district were examined. This phase took place primarily in the Kenya National archives and libraries, as well as at the University of Alberta libraries in Canada. The second phase of data collection involved the stylistic and technical analysis of photographs, paintings, as well as the available dress artifacts. This phase took place in the Kenya National Museum in Nairobi as well as in Kakamega district. The third phase of data collection involved the ethnographic method in which informants were interviewed about the various dress forms they wore during their lifetime. This phase took place in Kakamega district during

the autumn of 1991.

The major inhabitants of Kakamega district whose dress forms were studied during the period covered by this study are known as the Baluyia. The Baluyia, however, cannot be said to have been culturally isolated. Baluyia people met with other cultural groups like the Luo, Kalenjin, Maasai, Swahili and Teso among others (Ochieng, 1971, 1976; Osogo, 1966; Were and Wilson 1977).

The noun 'dress' in this study is defined as the composite of artifacts that enclose, attach to, modify, or are held by or for the body. The material component of dress includes corporeal forms which result from manipulating any part of the body through scarring, tattooing, painting, oiling, scenting, or hairdressing. Dress artifacts include headgear, strings of beads, flywhisks, wrappers, gowns, trousers, ornaments, and footwear, that is, all those ephemeral, semi-permanent, permanent, and removable forms of dress that make up an integral part of a person's total appearance (Biebuyck, 1982; Eicher and Thieme et. al., 1985; Umoetuk, 1986). 'Dress' as a verb or process, is the act of altering appearance (Kaiser, 1990). 'Clothing' on the other hand is more limiting and refers to that which encompasses artifacts of dress, that is, those objects that we obtain and attach to, or wear on our body (Kaiser, 1990).

Dress is a cultural symbol and a metaphor of the social

world of a people as well as a material manifestation of self and self-in-society (Hamilton and Hamilton, 1989). Dress reflects economic and social status, cultural and religious affiliation, and lifestyle (Forney, 1990). Dress also serves as a visual symbol of change and adjustment within an environment. Dress can be both an initiation of change and a confirmation of change (McCracken, 1987). Associated with technical and material change are corresponding non-material changes in attitudes, values, thoughts and behavior of the people. The non-material changes are more subtle and harder to measure (Foster, 1973).

The degree of intercultural contact is increasing in the world due to the improved infrastructure and this can be seen as dress forms diffuse across as well as within social systems. When different cultures meet, this often leads to changes in dress as forms are adopted and cultural elements blend (Kaiser 1985). The resulting creative composition of the elements in any dress, however, is due to the identity and genius of the people involved (Daley, Eicher & Erekoshima, 1986).

Fashion can be said to be a form of collective behavior which is socially approved at a given time but which is expected to change, or a social process by which new styles are created, introduced to, and popularly accepted by a consuming public (Kaiser, 1985; 1990). The fashion of an

era is the characteristic styles of the period, the styles that were different from those that had gone before and those that followed (Rouse, 1989). Umoetuk (1986) states that a study of dress without fashion would be uninteresting and dull, therefore this study examined the phenomenon of fashion in dress as it pertained to the inhabitants of Kakamega district.

The majority of the studies on the dress of the African people have been synchronic and have described dress at a particular time in history. However, it is a fact that change was going on at these times. In all societies change is a continuous norm (Ogot, 1976). This study is diachronic in nature and deals with dress and the socio-cultural patterns that may have played a role in its change. This is not an exhaustive study but rather lays down the groundwork for the study of dress of one of the peoples of Kenya.

In order to lay the diachronic groundwork this study is built on previous studies on the Baluyia which mention dress. These studies include Osogo's (1965) study on Baluyia life in the olden days and a year later on the history of the Baluyia, Stam's (1910) publication on the Bahanga (a Baluyia group) ethnography, Burt's (1980) dissertation on the history of Baluyia art which has a comprehensive section on early Baluyia dress as an art of the individual, and Joy Adamson's (1967) publication on the peoples of Kenya which includes paintings of Baluyia

ceremonial dress in 1949. My study, however, has gone further and documented the various dress forms worn not only in that distant past referred to as 'long ago,' but up until about 1963. The study will focus exclusively on dress in Kakamega district.

1.2 The statement of the problem and significance of the study.

In this study, the changing dress forms in Kakamega district, Kenya, were documented from the earliest records until independence in 1963. Socio-cultural factors were investigated in order to determine their influence on the changing dress forms. Socio-cultural factors are usually interdependent and probably impact on dress at the same time (Bigelow, 1979). For example, it is not easy to separate the influence of education from that of religion, politics, economics, or trade on dress. Other socio-cultural factors included age, gender, and occupation. 'Socio-cultural' indicates that the phenomena dealt with partake of both culture and society (Foster, 1973), and in this study, socio-cultural factors were sometimes separated for heuristic purposes of explanation and clarity.

The study of the history of dress in Kenya is an area that appears not to have been given much attention by scholars despite the country's rich dress heritage. The studies that have been done on dress are restricted to a

certain point in time. An historical study, by contrast brings out continuity and change in dress forms. Honorine Kiplagat who is Kenya's consultant with the United Nations Environmental Program, stated that in Kenya, there is a need to 'inform and educate ourselves and the young generation on the historical backgrounds and the cultural values of...traditional clothes' (Akumu, 1990, p.17). In 1982 Honorine Kiplagat was the coordinator for the All Africa Union Fashion Show held in London, to raise funds for child development in Africa.

At present, in public schools, colleges, and universities in Kenya, the Clothing and Textiles curriculum goes directly into the pattern drafting and dress construction techniques. Although these techniques are essential, if students were to study indigenous and historical dress forms, they could use their knowledge as design inspiration when creating contemporary dress fashions.

The value of artifacts and their history has continued to rise given the fact that most people in the world in general, leave few written documents about themselves (Vlach, 1985). This study will help in part to bring out the history of the 'invisible people'; that is, the ordinary people who are the majority leading supposedly ordinary lives, and whom the history of 'wars' and 'treaties' has left unrecorded. This study will contribute to the field of

history in Kenya by bringing in a perspective of the life of ordinary people. For example, when the Uganda Railway was completed, much was written about the railway's economic viability to the colonial government. Little was written about the impact on the indigenous peoples' life styles by the way the building of the railway ushered in foreigners, and trading centers along it's route which later became the major towns and cities in present day Kenya. This study will also contribute to the field of anthropology in the way in which it brings out continuity and change in the peoples' values and customs in regard to dress over the years.

1.3 Assumptions and limitations.

A major assumption of this study was that dress forms in Kakamega district could be reconstructed from the available photographs, paintings, informant accounts, artifacts, and documents. A further assumption was that the information from informants regarding dress forms was reliable.

A major limitation of this study was that the literature on dress forms in Kakamega district is scarce. The available literature on Kakamega district focuses on the roles and dress forms of males and not females. This could be due to gender bias of the authors. Of the available studies that mention Baluyia dress, nine out of ten were

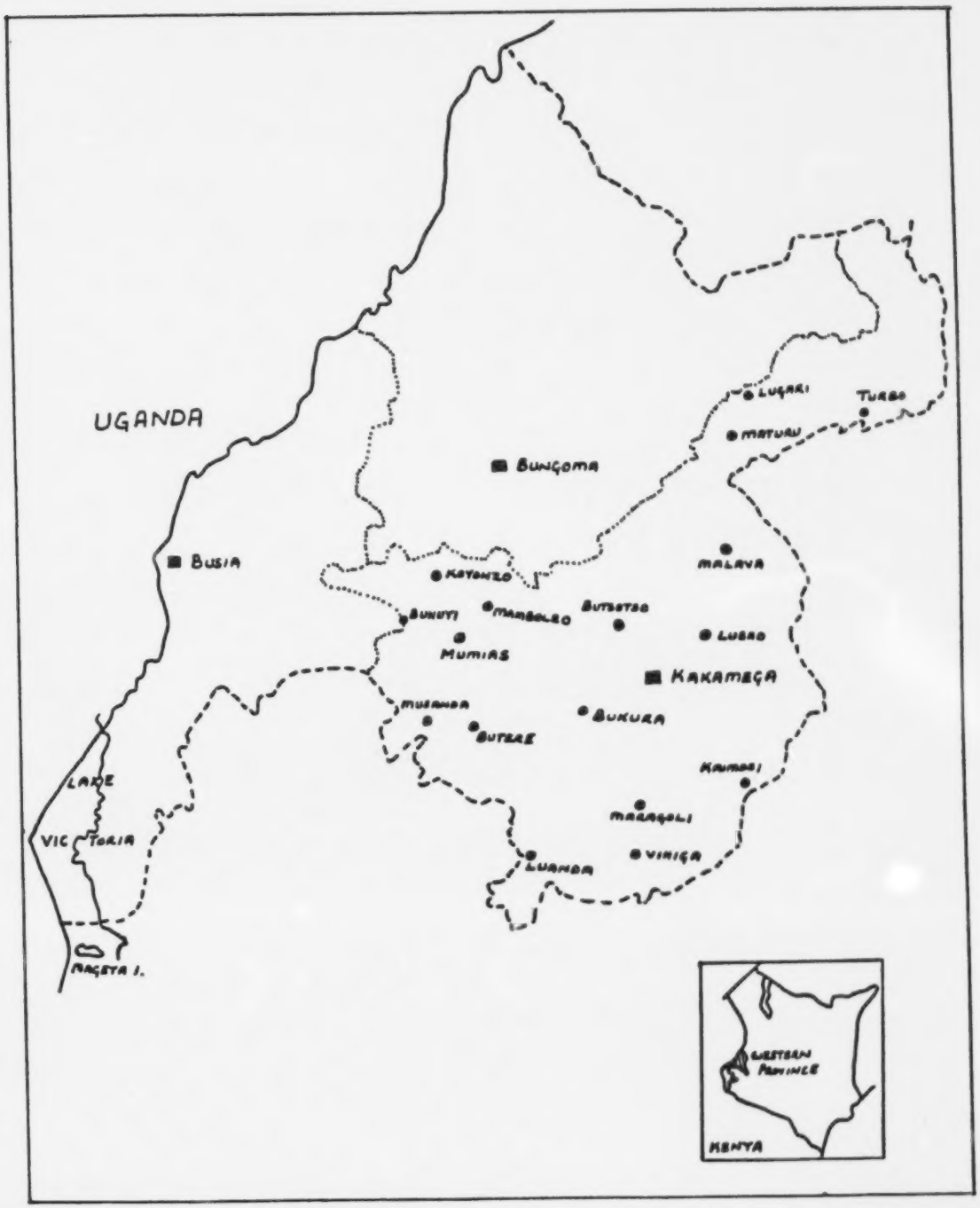
written by males. Informants may also remember selectively and long term memory is not always accurate (Bernard, 1988). As a result, valuable information can be lost.

The findings of this study cannot be generalized for Kenya which is in itself a limitation. Kenya is culturally diverse and there are a number of other peoples of Kenya whose dress history did not follow the same pattern as that of the Baluyia of Kakamega district.

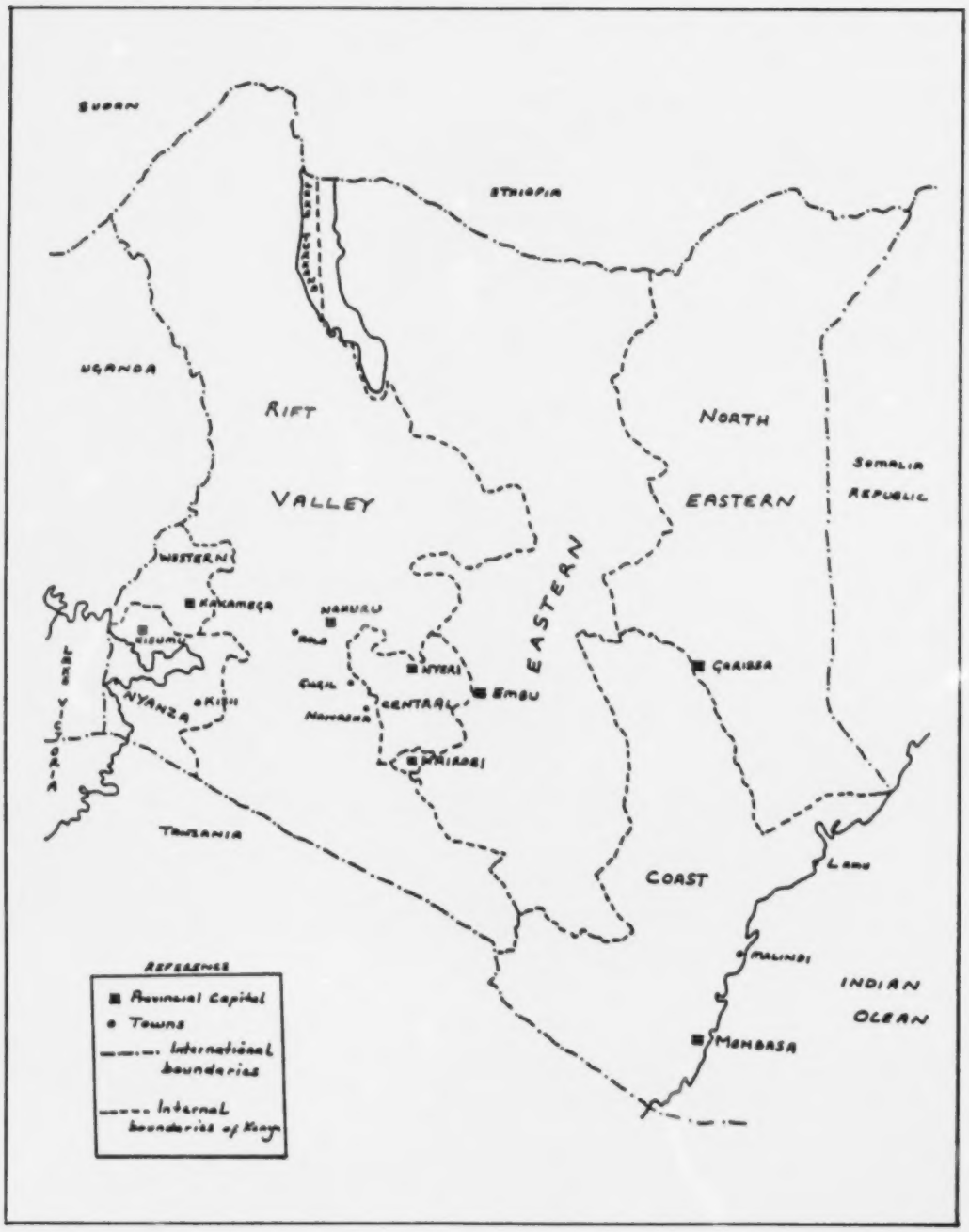
This study is limited to that geographical area that came to be called 'Kakamega district' after the Kenya Independence Constitution of 1963 (Osogo, 1966). The noun 'Kakamega' refers to both the district and the major town in the district (see Map 1). During the last decade of the nineteenth century and in much of the twentieth century, the area which Kakamega district is now a part of was also referred to as 'North Kavirondo' and 'North Nyanza'. North Kavirondo and North Nyanza included other areas which do not fall within the present site of data collection. However, where relevant, events which took place in, and/or affected the general area that was later named Kakamega district have been discussed.

N.B. In this study, the loose translations of words in the Baluyia language are the researcher's own.

MAP 1. Kakamega district.



MAP 2. Kenya.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NAKURU
EASTERN
KISUMU
NYERI
EMBU
CENTRAL
NYANZA
KISII
NAIROBI
TANZANIA
COAST
LAMU
MALINDI
INDIAN
OCEAN
MOMBASA
REFERENCE
Provincial Capital
Towns
International boundaries
Internal boundaries of Kenya

MAP 3. Africa.

NORTH ATLANTIC OCEAN
TUNISIA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
MOROCCO
ALGERIA
LIBYA
EGYPT
RED SEA
WESTERN SAHARA
MAURITANIA
MALI
NIGER
CHAD
SUDAN
SENEGAL
GAMBIA
BURKINA FASO
GUINEA
BENIN
NIGERIA
DJIBOUTI
SIERRA LEONE
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1.4 Overview of dress literature on Africa.

This overview focuses on dress studies carried out in Africa (see Map 3) and will demonstrate the need for historical studies on dress.

Africa is a very large continent. It is the second largest in the world at two million square miles (Dostert, 1990). There are about 52 countries on the African continent (World of Information, 1988), with an estimated population of about 500 million. In Nigeria alone there are over 250 languages spoken (Dostert 1990), and in Kenya, over 41 languages (Amin and Eames, 1988). Yet these are just two out of the fifty two countries in Africa (see Map 3). In addition to the thousands of local languages spoken, English, French, German, and Portuguese, which were introduced during colonialism, are also widely spoken. Of the local languages, Kiswahili is the most widely spoken in Africa (Mazrui, 1986).

Literature pertaining to dress in Africa could be written in any of the languages used in that continent. The knowledge of dress forms in Africa could be better appreciated if a co-operative data base were set up to index locally published materials on dress in Africa in any language. At present, it is a fact that researchers will tend to read more of the most readily available data on African dress and in the more commonly spoken languages.

When discussing dress in the African continent, there

could be a bias towards certain regions like West Africa for which information is more readily available. There is also a tendency to leave out, or say little about certain regions such as Southern, Eastern and Central Africa where the written material is relatively scanty (Cole, 1973). This major bias in the available literature is partly due to the language barrier or to literature not being easily procurable. Peil (1982) has articulated the difficulties that pertain to procuring literature for research purposes in many parts of Africa.

The available literature found in the English language on dress in Africa revealed that of the studies in the area, those that focus on dress history are fewer in number. Most of the studies center around the techniques of creating dress. They are mostly synchronic and based on participant-observation. For example, Imperato's two studies (1973; 1974) discuss the techniques of making covers and blankets among the Peul and Maninka of Africa. Both Polakoff (1971) and Canizzo (1983) have conducted studies on tie and dye in different regions in Africa and write about the techniques involved as well as the results of these techniques.

Kent (1972) reports on the decorative weaving techniques of the various weavers in West African countries. The process of weaving the popular kente cloth has been described by Kent (1971), Lamb (1975), Picton and Mack (1979), and Sjarief (1970), among others. The art of Yoruba

weaving has been described by Davis (1974), and Aremu (1982). In a study of Hausa embroidery by Heathcote (1972), the techniques of embroidery are described as well as their variations relative to the status of the owner.

Some of the studies examine one or two items of dress. For example, McNoughton's (1982) study on the unique features of shirts worn by the Mande for hunting. McNoughton's study brings out how the philosophy of the society is manifested in their shirt. D. Lambrecht and F. Lambrecht (1977), write on the use of leather and beads as well as the technique of making them in South Africa. Ogunwale's (1972) study of hairdressing in Nigeria deals with one aspect of dress and describes the hairstyles and names given to each hairstyle. Although Ogunwale mentions some styles of the past, the study is not historical in nature.

Smith's (1982) study on Frafra dress is not diachronic but contrasts dress of the past with modern dress. Okeke (1982) picks out common design features of wrappers on the market to determine contemporary design trends. Schneider's (1973) study on scarification, and Uzochukwu's (1987) study on body paint deal with one aspect of dress as per the definition in this study.

There are other studies that deal with dress for a specific occasion or status. Biebuyk (1973) deals with circumcision, Dike (1987) deals with royalty, and Stroebel

(1975), with weddings. Stroebel studied weddings in the Coast province of Kenya. In her study, she observed gender roles, music and dance as well as dress during weddings of the elite and the former slaves of the region.

Of the historical studies of dress in Africa, the dress of ancient Egypt appears to be most researched. Boucher (1967), Laver (1969), and Bigelow (1979) have written about the history of dress in ancient Egypt. Other studies on the history of dress include Wass' (1975) study of Yoruba dress. In her study on Yoruba dress, Wass documented the dress of an extended family in Lagos, Nigeria and how it changed over five generations. Umoetuk's (1986) study of Ibibio dress in Nigeria, Bourgeois' (1982) study on headgear, and Mackay's (1974) study of jewelry worn by the elite in Ethiopia also used a diachronic perspective. Strutt (1975) has written a fashion history of South Africa between 1652 and 1900. The costumes included in Strutt's study, however, are only those pertaining to the European people of South Africa.

As this sample of publications indicates, there is a need for studies in the history of dress in Africa. The scarcity of systematic documentation on the history of dress of the indigenous people poses problems across Africa. In Kenya (see Map 2), descriptions of dress may be found in ethnographies and other non-fiction publications such as travel diaries. Although these materials give good descriptions of dress, they are synchronic in nature.

Examples include K. Routledge and W. Routledge's (1910) ethnography on the Kikuyu. This study has detailed descriptions of dress and meanings of dress worn during the first decade of the twentieth century. Fisher's (1984) publication illustrates indigenous dress of Africa and includes a large section on the dress of the Maasai people of Kenya.

This study on dress history in Kakamega district examines dress of the society in general. The diachronic approach made it possible to provide a broad survey of dress history over about eight decades in Kakamega, Kenya. Future studies in the same area will be able to focus on specific and more narrowly defined issues in dress.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter the research methods and procedures that were followed during this study will be discussed. Studies involving socio-cultural aspects of clothing have frequently utilized methods borrowed from other disciplines. These other disciplines include history, sociology, social psychology and anthropology. The determination of an appropriate method, however, depends on the problem to be studied (Baizerman, 1987).

In this study the ethnohistorical approach was used. Ethnohistory was developed as a study of change (Trigger, 1982). It is a form of cultural biography which draws upon material culture, visual sources, earlier ethnographies as well as historical documents (Pannabecker, 1991; Welters, 1992). This holistic and diachronic approach becomes even more rewarding when supplemented with the voices of living people (Simmons, 1988).

The data was collected in three phases. The first phase utilized the historical research method to examine written documentary data pertaining to dress forms in Africa and Kakamega district. This phase began in the University of Alberta and Edmonton public libraries in Canada, and

continued in the Kenya National archives and public libraries. The second phase involved the stylistic and technical analysis of visual data such as photographs, paintings, and available dress artifacts. This phase took place primarily in the museum. The third phase of data collection involved the ethnographic research method in which informants were interviewed on their memoirs of dress. This phase took place in Kakamega district.

Although a period of approximately one month was allocated for each phase, data type overlapped in most instances. For example, there was photographic as well as documentary data in the archives, and ethnographic, photographic, and artifact data in the field.

2.2 Historic method.

The first phase of the research involved the historic method. In historic research, the researcher inquires about experiences, events and trends that occurred in the past with the objective of accurately describing and interpreting them (Touliatos and Compton, 1988). Historic research can be a means of dealing with significance and latent meanings of history (Leedy, 1980).

Through a perusal of literature, it became apparent that written documents pertaining to dress in Kakamega area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century are scarce. During this period in Kenya, colonial

administrators, travelers, missionaries and some anthropologists wrote about their experiences based on their own perspectives.

Curtin (1968) noted that colonial administrators, travelers, missionaries, and anthropologists were not professional historians and were thus not principally concerned with preserving historical material for the use of others. They took notes for their own use and came to conclusions that can no longer be checked. When they did leave notes on deposit in archives or libraries, the notes were based on the words of field interpreters and the original words of the tradition cannot be recovered. However, Curtin has warned that the contribution of the early collectors must not be underestimated.

In this phase of data collection, written information pertaining to dress in the Kakamega district up to 1963 was collected from various primary as well as secondary written sources. The primary sources included the following:

(a) Available records of missionaries who had stations within Kakamega district. These mission stations included the Church Mission Society, Friends' African Mission, and the Mill Hill Mission which though now scattered in various locations of the district, started out in Butere, Kaimosi, and Mumias respectively.

(b) In Kenya, administrative officers are required to write annual reports on their respective districts of

jurisdiction. Administrative reports pertaining to the district and time period under study were therefore examined for any references to dress.

(c) Private unpublished papers of individuals from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which have become public, and are housed in the Kenya National Archives were examined.

(d) Published accounts acquired through the University of Alberta's inter-library loan service were also examined. These included accounts written by explorers, missionaries, and other personalities who wrote about their experiences in the area as well as other relevant publications.

The secondary sources examined included yearbooks dating from 1908 on Kenya (then known as British East Africa), and various newspapers. The newspapers included the 'Standard Newspaper' whose circulation began in 1902 as the 'African Standard'. In 1910, this paper was renamed the 'East African Standard'. The 'Sauti ya Mwafrica' newspaper which was started by the Kenya African Union in 1946 with W.W.W.Awori as the editor was also examined as well as the 'Taifa leo' newspaper which was started in the late 1950's by Charles Hayes. The 'Daily Nation' newspaper which started in 1961 with the aim of expressing an African point of view was also examined. Although there was little specifically on dress in Kakamega district in the above newspapers, the articles and photographs depicted dress worn

in Kenya during the period covered by this study.

Other secondary sources from the Kenya National library, University of Alberta, and Edmonton public libraries included journal articles, books and other relevant published materials.

2.2.1 Recording of documentary data.

It is important for the researcher to understand the wholeness of a document, the context out of which it was created and the configurational whole of which it is a part (Wiedman, 1986) in order to detect potential bias in documents. In this study, the author and potential reader for which the document was intended were recorded if the information was available. Summaries, drawings, or copies of relevant data were made where possible.

2.3 Stylistic and technical analysis of photographs, paintings,and artifacts.

The second phase of data collection involved the stylistic analysis of dress portrayed in photographs as well as the stylistic and technical analysis of artifacts. This phase took place in the Kenya National Museum. The Kenya National Museum is one of the largest in Tropical Africa. The museum is famous for its natural history collections. It also houses a wide variety of archaeological, palaeontological and ethnograpic specimens. The museum

dates from 1910 when a number of naturalists decided to form the East Africa and Uganda Natural History Society (Ogot, 1981).

In 1949, Joy Adamson painted the peoples of Kenya in their indigenous ceremonial costumes (Adamson, 1967). The originals of the paintings hang in the gallery of the National Museum and a few pertain to dress in Kakamega. The fact that the paintings are accurate in their depiction of dress was corroborated by photographs as well as the few surviving artifacts in the museum. Artifacts of dress examined consisted of dress of males and females including ornaments and accessories.

Photographs were a crucial source of information in this study as they were the only visual images of dress that were found for much of the period under study. Photographs provide a rich source of documentation of the past and can be examined as artifacts of culture. The accuracy of interpretations of photographs, however, depends on the amount of available information about the complex relationships between subject, setting, culture, and photographer (Scherer, 1988). When used together with field research or other historical documents, photographs can be very powerful (Blackman, 1986). In this study, they were used together with informant, archival, and artifact data. Photographic data were collected from the 'Kenya National Archives Photograph Collection', illustrations from

published sources as well as from individual people's private collections. Some of the photographic data were also collected from publications in the libraries at the University of Alberta, Canada.

2.3.1 Recording of visual data.

A photodocumentation record was used to establish a file of visual examples of dress forms for the period under study. Photographic data were also assessed for bias, omissions, or presence of error. This was achieved by cross checking with the different types of data from various sources. For example while one photograph was dated by an informant as being taken in 1909, another informant dated it at 1920. The photograph was taken during the opening of the Kakamega hospital. Written records from the District officer's files, and a book written about the area agreed that the hospital had been opened in 1922.

The photographic medium records certain aspects of the world and can be misleading by representing static instants of the past (Null and Balkwell, 1987). For example, a family may dress up especially for a photograph in clothes they would not normally wear and the researcher may not know this. Photographs need to be interpreted with care and an inventory made of everything appearing in the photograph. When the exploratory function of visual evidence is ignored or lost, the photographs become mere illustrations with

little research value (Collier and Collier, 1987).

Most of the photographs pertaining to the research period were black and white and therefore assessment of the popular colors worn could not be made from the photographs. In this study, it was the dress forms that were of the most importance. However, colors were recorded when mentioned in oral or written sources.

Appendix 1 is an example of the data sheet that was filled out for each photograph. The section numbers 2, 3 and 4 were adapted from Baizerman's (1987) photodocumentation form. The rest was developed by myself with some ideas from Wass (1975) to suit the purposes of this study.

2.4 The ethnographic method.

In this third phase of data collection, semi-structured interviews (Peil, 1982) were conducted. Semi-structured interviewing which is based on the use of an interview guide is carried out with a minimum of control over informants' responses. The advantage of a semi-structured interview is that its flexibility permits freedom to introduce previously unanticipated questions (Kemp and Ellen, 1984).

An interview guide can be a written list of questions and topics to be covered (Bernard, 1988; Johnson, 1990; Peil, 1982). From a review of related literature, certain questions emerged on the history of dress in Kakamega

district (see Appendix 2). These questions were used as the interview guide.

In this study, a key attribute of the informant was his/her knowledge of, and a willingness to give information, on the history of dress. Ideally, the informants should have been at least 80 years old. However, since the average life expectancy is less than that, younger individuals were included based on their interest in and knowledge of history of dress.

Non-probability sampling was used to select the informants. The initial informants were located with the assistance of a local leader. Thereafter, snowball sampling was employed. Snowball sampling refers to locating one or more key informants and then asking them to name others who will be likely candidates for the research (Bernard, 1988; Oakes and Riewe, 1992; Peil, 1982; Touliatos and Compton, 1988).

The disadvantage of non-probability sampling is that it lowers the validity of the study. However, when backed by other data, non-probability sampling techniques can be highly credible (Bernard, 1988). The fact that in 1974, Kinyanjui, a researcher in Kenya, traced 91% of the school leavers in her sample through snowballing (Peil, 1982), attests to the effectiveness of this method.

The final sample size was twenty-eight (28) informants. Of greater importance, was the quality of the data rather

than the number of informants. However, as far as was possible, informants were selected from the different centers in Kakamega district --Bukura, Butere, Kaimosi, Kakamega town, Lugari, Malava, Mbale, Mumias, and Osore (see Map 1).

During interviews some photographs of dress forms pertaining to the period under study were carried in order to act as memory joggers. Burt (1982) was successful when he used photographs to elicit information from elderly Baluyia concerning the meaning of scarification. Each informant was interviewed for at least a morning or an evening (about four hours). The large block of time was necessary because the interview could be interrupted as the informant continued performing his or her usual daily chores. A further interview was requested if clarification of certain points was needed.

2.4.1 Recording of informant data.

Where permission from the informant was granted, the interview was audio recorded. Although the use of a tape recorder can be problematic in research (Bernard, 1988), the advantage is that the conversation does not run the risk of being interrupted by the appearance of a large notebook, or by time taken to jot down entries (Kemp & Ellen, 1984). One of the male informants in this study found it extremely rude every time notes were jotted down while he was talking. In

that case especially, the tape recorder was very useful.

Numerous factors may influence the validity and reliability of informants. Such factors include intentional error (lying), involuntary error such as memory lapses, and the dynamics of the interview situation among others (Kemp and Ellen, 1984). The data were checked by triangulation. It was cross-checked with the documentary as well as visual data and by going back to discuss inconsistencies with informants. It was not possible to clarify all points of conflicting data in the field, and thus correspondence continued with a key informant after returning to Edmonton.

Informant dilemmas

In this study, the field data was of great importance. It is from the informants that the most detailed data was procured. The informants filled in some of the historical gaps such as life in general in the villages, local indigenous wars and the forms of dress worn throughout the years. Informants also brought out the emotions that the various dress forms evoked in society.

Although snowball sampling was used to select informants, the resultant informants were from varied backgrounds. It is however interesting to note that the recommended informants were usually male. Even the female informants who were interviewed would recommend a male informant for further interview. This was especially

evident in the case of younger female informants (aged less than sixty years). On the other hand, the older female informants such as Maria Saleh, Ireni Mudenyo, and Nasiche who were aged over sixty years recommended other elder female informants for further interviews. Probably this trend had something to do with the status of individuals in the community. Men command authority by virtue of their gender and for women, this applies more to elder females than to younger females.

As far as possible, an effort was made to balance male and female informants as the study involved both male and female dress. The resultant number of formal informants were fourteen (14) males and fifteen (15) females. In addition there were other persons who spared their time to comment on dress although they were not formally interviewed. Such persons included those met on the way to an interview, in the local market, or guests of formal informants.

The interview would proceed with a question and then the informant would be left to speak freely. A point of interest was that most informants chose to speak about the things they found exciting such as wars, weddings, family lineages, and then finally they would turn their focus on dress. When an effort was made to rush the informants immediately into the dress information required, the result was one syllable answers or stiff single sentences from

them, and the whole episode would flow like an oral examination and no longer like an interview. When informants were given ample time to speak, the most detailed data would be procured as they would eventually focus on dress, describing it within the context in which it was worn.

During interviews, informants were extremely hospitable and always offered a lot of food. After the meal, there was a noticeable relaxing and opening up of the informants. However, one elderly female informant who lived quite far out brought in many dishes of food and then the customary tea. As she did all the cooking on her own, time simply went by. She would not allow any help offered in the cooking. Finally it was already night and time to leave. The only achievement other than enjoying the meal was studying her large collection of family photographs in between the meals. As field time was coming to an end, there was not another opportunity to formally interview her on her views on dress.

It is of importance that informants be acknowledged as they are the source of the information they give. In this study however, informants preferred to be treated in different ways. For example, some were willing to be acknowledged for their information whilst others were suspicious of being acknowledged and voiced doubts as to the purpose of the eventual paper. Due to the above mentioned

difference in informants' wishes, full names shall be used for those who wished to be acknowledged and initials of names shall be used for those who did not wish their names to appear on the document (see Appendix 7).

A further dilemma was faced when interviewing the surviving members of the Nabongo's family. The Nabongos are from one family and their male heirs have ruled large parts of Buluyia since the 1700's. This family expected respect and not undisguised curiosity. Again there was probably some ancient form of protocol expected that was not met because the interviews were quite agonizing. The said individuals would take extremely long pauses before answering any question put to them. On occasions there was a wish to give up altogether until it became apparent that persistence was producing results. In the end their interest was aroused and permission was granted not only to see but also to use their family photographs for this study on dress.

Analysis

Qualitative work is more inductive than deductive and hypotheses are generated from the data. What counts as a unit of analysis is an interpretive issue requiring judgment and choice. Meanings rather than frequencies are significantly more important (Fielding and Fielding, 1986; Miles and Huberman, 1984). In this study, analysis was an

ongoing process. The process involved a continuous writing of how the data fitted together, and a constant checking and cross checking of the different sources of data to identify and correct error.

CHAPTER 3

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.

3.1 Introduction.

Although objectivity is an elusive phenomenon in history (Were, 1974), an attempt will nevertheless be made to objectively portray the history of the Baluyia in the region under study. The historical events which took place in, or affected the general area that was later named Kakamega district (see Map 1), will be discussed in order to explain the context in which the changing dress forms were taking place. In this history, there will be an attempt to include dress forms worn where the information is revealed by literature.

The earliest recorded history of East Africa is based largely on the coastal region. The area further away from the coast was referred to in historical accounts as 'the Interior' of the continent (Amin & Eames, 1988; Low, 1963; Oliver & Atmore, 1980; Were and Wilson, 1977). The earliest hominid remains to date were found in the Olduvai gorge in the East African interior and date back to the stone age (Were and Wilson, 1977; Rinehart, 1983). The history of East Africa prior to 1800, of which Kakamega district is a part, is still being slowly pieced together by historians and archaeologists (Were and Wilson, 1977). Similarly,

references pertaining to dress during the period prior to 1800 are rare.

Since the available literature revealed that a systematic history of dress of any of the peoples of Kenya has not been written, it is of benefit to begin the study from earliest times. This study begins with the earliest published data for Kakamega district: 1883. The earliest written account that makes a reference to the dress of the Baluyia in Western Kenya is 'Through Maasailand' by Joseph Thomson which was published in 1885, but describes the journey he made in 1883.

Oral historical accounts also provide much detail about events that took place from about this same time. Osogo's (1965) publication about life in the society during a period close to 1883 was pieced together from oral accounts. However, a review of earlier references to items of dress for the interior are included in this study. This gives a sense of continuity, as well as a more holistic perspective to dress in Western Kenya.

3.2 The 'Interior'

At about the second century A.D., Greeks and Romans were writing about the East African coast (Were & Wilson, 1977; Rinehart, 1983). A Greek manuscript, the 'Periplus of the Erythrian sea' mentions that:

> ...there are imported into these places undressed cloth, robes from Aden, double fringed mantles,

> articles of flint, glass and brass used for ornament... (Amin & Eames, 1988, p. 27).

From about 1000 A.D. to 1500 A.D., there was trade between China, Indonesia, Ceylon, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and the Africans, Persians and Arabs living on the East African coast (see Map 4). Arab and Persian settlers referred to the East African coast between Mogadishu and Delgado as the 'land of Zanj', that is, the 'land of the Black people'. Imports included porcelain, silk, daggers, glass, hardware, cloth, beads and cowries. Exports included ivory, gold, iron, copper, slaves, and ambergris (Were & Wilson, 1977).

European interest in the East African coast began when Vasco da Gama, a Portuguese, arrived in Malindi in 1498 A.D.(Were & Wilson, 1977). In the early sixteenth century, another Portuguese, Duarte Barbosa, wrote that the Moors came in small vessels from the Kingdoms of:

> ...Mombaca and Melyindi [Mombasa and Malindi, both on the Kenya coast], bringing many cotton cloths, some spotted and others white and ...also some of silk and many small beads, gray, red and yellow, which things came to the said kingdoms from the great kingdom of Cambaya (in India) in other great ships... and...sold them afterwards to the heathen of the Benametapa [in the African interior], who came thither laden with gold...
>
> (Vowles, 1975, p.40).

Thus goods pertaining to dress ended up in the 'Interior' where they were used in various ways.

Joseph Thomson was the first European explorer to journey into the 'Interior' through the previously

impenetrable Maasai country. On 28 November 1883, Joseph Thomson entered Kabras (located in present day Kakamega district). On his arrival he was greeted by the familiar coastal greeting 'Jambo', shouted from all sides (Thomson, 1885). The Baluyia use the word 'mirembe' (peace), as a greeting. Therefore the use of a coastal greeting by so many people confirmed that they had a link with the coast.

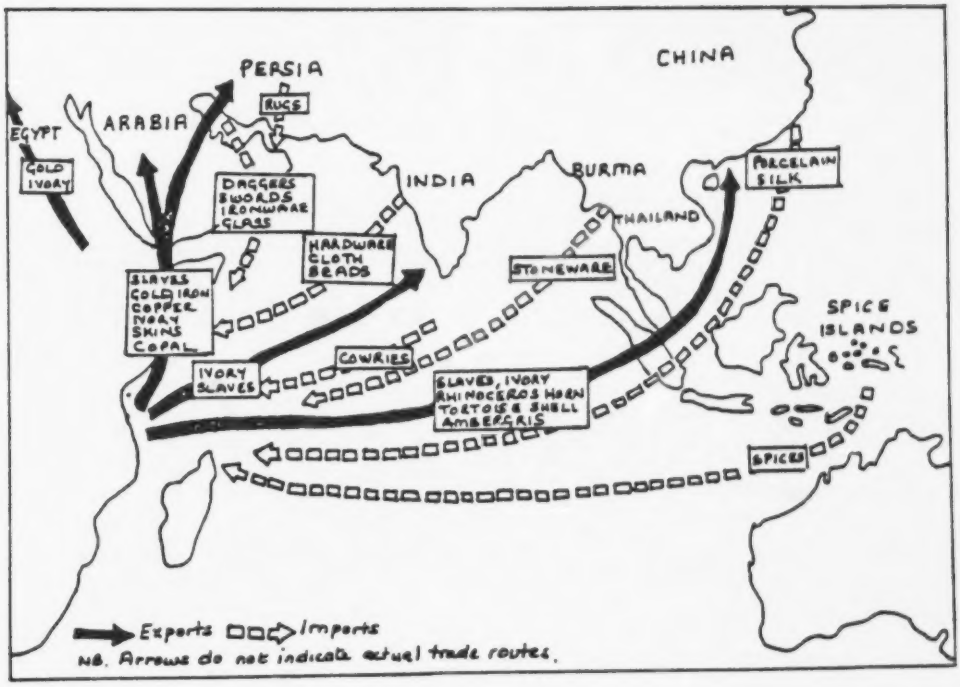
Thomson confirms Baluyia trade links with the coast when he writes about a caravan of 1500 men that was stationed at Kwa Sundu (now called Mumias division in Kakamega district). Thomson also mentions that trade had been going on with the coast for many years before his arrival, and hostilities existed between the people and the traders as the traders captured small children as slaves.

On his journey, Thomson had taken as guides a Maltese called James Martin and an African called Muhinna, both of whom appeared to know the route well. Burke (1976), also mentions that some Baluyia who were captured by slavers were sold to the Seychelles during the reign of Nabongo Shiundu from 1841 to 1882. One of Thomson's porters on the journey, called Mabruki, was originally from Kavirondo and had been sold as a child into slavery on the coast. During Thomson's expedition, Mabruki was recognized as a brother of Uchen, one of the chiefs of Kavirondo area (Thomson 1885). Kakamega district lies on the old Coast to Buganda trade route (see Map 5), and it is highly possible that items of

dress destined for the 'Interior' could have ended up in the area.

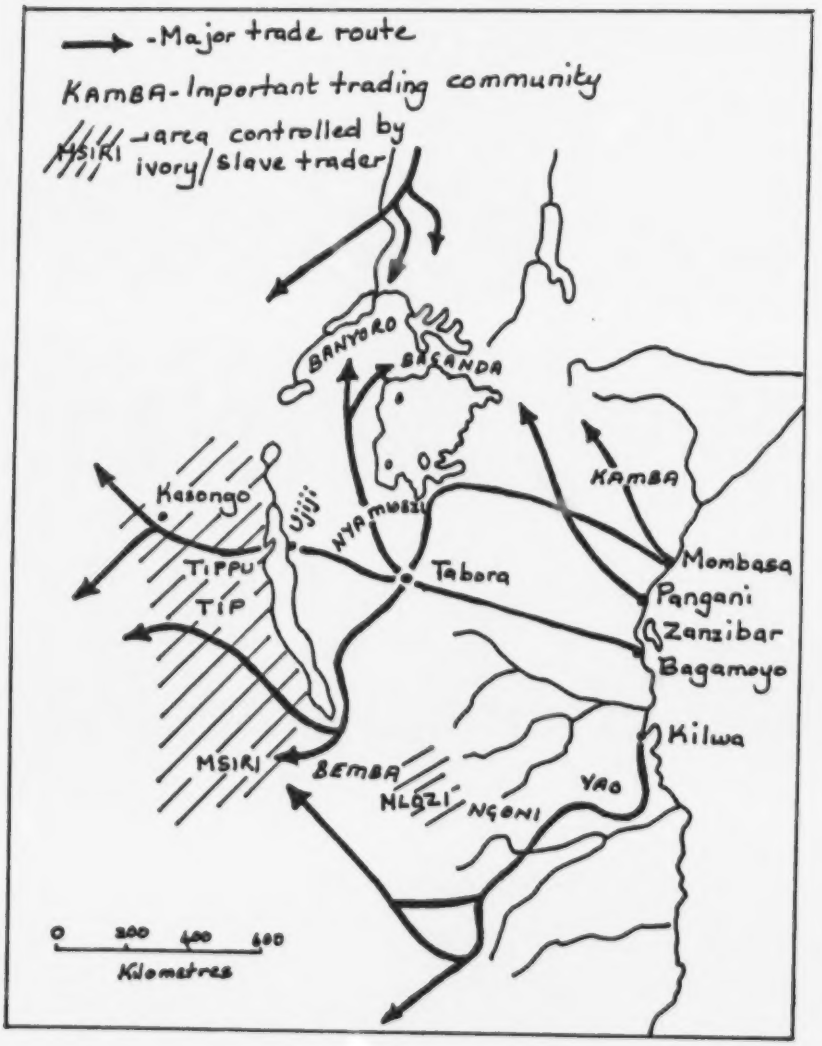
MAP 4. East Africa's trade with other lands 1000-1500 AD.

Adapted from East Africa through 1000 years by G. Were and D. Wilson, 1977, London: Evans brothers ltd.



MAP 5. Trade in the interior of East Africa c. 1880.

Adapted from East Africa through 1000 years by G. Were and D. Wilson, 1977, London: Evans brothers ltd.



3.2.1 Western Kenya: late 1880's to 1963.

Western Kenya, in which Kakamega district is located, lies in the extreme West of the country (see Map 2). The equator passes through its extreme south and Mount Elgon, an extinct volcano, is situated at its extreme north. The area forms an undulating plateau with pleasant altitudes offering many views of scenic beauty. The land is fertile and gets reasonable to high amounts of rain distributed over two seasons in the year. Presently, the area supports a medium to dense population of 169-1200 persons per square kilometer (Lavrijsen, 1984).

Western Kenya was settled by Bantu-speaking people from the late 1590's to the early 1700's. The noun 'Bantu' is a classification of the group of related languages spoken widely in East, Central, and Southern Africa. Examples include Taita, Kamba, Kikuyu, Chagga, Zulu, Shona, and Bemba among others. The majority of clans of the people who later called themselves 'Baluyia,' were founded between 1590 and early 1700 in Western Kenya (Were, 1967). The immigrants had stayed for a period in the area that is today called Eastern Uganda. They later left for their present location for a variety of reasons which included tse tse infestation, local disputes, a desire for more land as well as the spirit of adventure (Were & Wilson, 1977).

During the late nineteenth century, the Baluyia local government worked in the following way. The smallest unit

of government was the 'olukongo' which consisted of several villages in a ridge or valley. The 'olukongo' had a leader who acted as chairman in the 'olukongo's' council of elders. The leader could issue orders when together with the council, but not on his own. The leader of 'olukongo' was a man who was able to wield great influence over the people in his area. He was usually a chief land owner, rainmaker, or respected medicine man. The 'olukongo's' duties included solving disputes, taking care of the land, and organizing festivals. In some regions, several 'tsingongo' (plural of olukongo) united to form a bigger council. The biggest council of all was the one that advised the Nabongo (king). The members of the Nabongo's council of elders were partly picked by himself and partly elected. There were no formal taxes, but whenever payment for fines, fees or festivals was required, the council would authorize collection in livestock, grain, or poultry (Stam, 1910, 1919-20, 1929; Osogo, 1965, 1966; Wagner, 1970).

The Baluyia did not possess a regular permanent army, but every man was on the alert. If the war horn were to sound, men would appear in a matter of minutes in full war regalia. In 1883, Thomson, had the experience of witnessing the speed at which the people assembled if there was suspicion of trouble in their land. Thomson went on to state that from what he saw, he could understand how traders had lost men, as within an hour several thousand warriors

could be collected from this populous region (Thomson, 1885). Later Nabongos such as Mumia employed large armies of Maasai warriors and thus wielded a great deal of power and influence.

During the late nineteenth to early twentieth century, hunting was common. Apart from meat, items pertaining to dress were also objectives of the hunt. These included buffalo skin for the construction of flat strapped shoes as protection against thorns. Colobus skin (ituru) was used for the making of colorful robes and headgear. Giraffe tail hair (obutiga) was used for the making of bracelets worn around the wrist, ankle and neck of women. Zebra tail (imbwori) was used for making an expensive fly whisk used only by chiefs or famous medicine men. Ostrich feathers (amawudo) and the long tail feathers of a rare bird called 'isimbishira/isimbikhira' were for the use of ceremonial headgear to be used in the funeral of a father or mother-in-law. The ivory of the hippo, warthog, and elephant was for a crescent-like item, (igweli), worn by elderly men on their forehead as a sign of riches and power (Burt, 1980; Osogo, 1965).

In the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, trade was by barter. One goat was sold for three hoes, one bull for three goats, and one cow for four goats (Osogo, 1965). Buying by pledge, 'omusingo', was a hire purchase commonly used when buying grain and meat during

famine or when someone had no resources.

People bought and sold what they needed in the village. It was not necessary to go to the market for trade. Markets were few and far away and only functioned during periods of scarcity. The journey to the market was hazardous, and people from one olukongo would travel in a caravan on foot. The journey could take several days. Such caravan journeys enabled the villagers to meet new people and learn new ideas. Friendships with foreigners developed and often led to marriage ties. The items sold in the markets included:

> ...weapons like Knives, axes, spears, shields, and hoes; household utensils like baskets, pots, dishes; furniture like stools; items of dress like prepared skins, bark cloth, beads, bangles, ceremonial hats, and caps; poultry,...cattle, sheep, goats... (Osogo, 1965, p.26).

Between 1884 and 1885, the Berlin conference laid down rules for the partition of Africa by European states. On the first of July, 1885, the future Kenya was declared a British protectorate (Low, 1965; Ogot, 1981; Were & Wilson, 1977). In February of the same year, a Briton, C.W. Hobley was sent to Mumias (Formerly Kwa Sundu) as a subcommissioner to open up an administrative headquarter in North Kavirondo (Hobley, 1910, 1970).

By 1896, Captain Slater completed the widening of the trade route to Mumias from the East, so that oxcarts could use it. The new widened route was called Slater Road (Ogot, 1981; Trzebinski, 1986; Wagner, 1970). Pioneer Andrew Dick was a Scotsman who came to Kenya as an employee of the

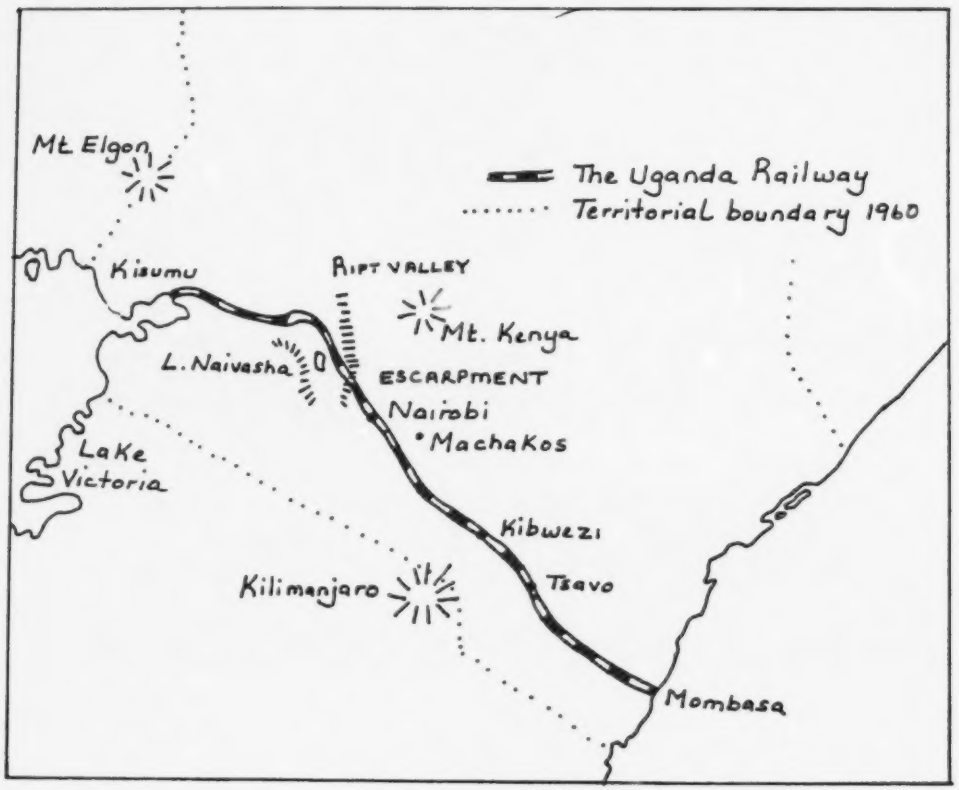
Imperial British East Africa company. By the time the road was being widened, Andrew Dick had received a five year concession at Mumias. The concession included eleven plots from which to run his transport centers along the entire length of the trade route to Uganda (Trzebinski, 1986).

For a majority of the people in Western Kenya, the establishment of British rule only began to make itself felt with the introduction of hut tax in 1899 (Nabudere, 1981, 1982; Wagner, 1970). The first taxes were levied in kind with timber, iron hoes, livestock and human labor (Wagner, 1970). According to the diary of John Ainsworth, 9 May, 1898 was the first day that rupees were issued as currency. Previously, beads and cloth were used as currency (Rodwell, 1971; Trzebinski, 1986) and it was only gradually and in subsequent years that the rupee took over the former mediums of exchange (Wagner, 1970).

In 1901, the Uganda railway (see Map 6) reached Kisumu and a branch was subsequently extended to Butere in Kakamega district. With the completion of the railway, larger groups of Swahilis and Indians came to Kavirondo to set up shops. In 1903, the first Indian shop opened up in Fort Maxted (present day Kakamega town), bringing a variety of goods. By 1905 there was also a flourishing indigenous market at Mumias known as 'eshiro shia Nabongo' (King's market).

MAP 6. Uganda railway.

Adapted from East Africa through 1000 years by G. Were and D. Wilson, 1977, London: Evans brothers ltd.



MAP 7. Wanga Kingdom.

Adapted from East Africa through 1000 years by G. Were and D. Wilson, 1977, London: Evans brothers ltd.

The Indian and Swahili population continued to grow. By 1909 there were 65 Arabs, Indians and Swahilis living and trading in Mumias, thus increasing the multi-cultural element. According to Soja (1968), it is difficult to measure the importance of the Asian trader merchants as agents of change. At the beginning of this century in many parts of Kenya, it was through the Indian duka or shop that many indigenous people first came in contact with a non-African culture.

The political scene was also changing. In 1909, the British wanted to extend indirect rule over the area through chiefs appointed by Nabongo Mumia. Nabongo Mumia of Wanga was nominated by the British to rule over the whole of Buluyia (the country). However, fierce opposition from non-Wanga Baluyia led to the eventual fall of the Wanga kingdom (see Map 7) by 1937 (Osogo, 1966; Were & Wilson, 1977).

The year 1905 marked the establishment and expansion of a number of mission stations in the district. The Mill Hill Mission and Friends' African Mission were both established in 1905. The Church Mission Society was established in 1906, and Church of God in 1907. The mission stations continued to multiply rapidly and to spread during the following decades up to about 1936 (Wagner, 1970).

The major aim of the missionaries was to spread Christianity to the people. Education is a tool of socialization and the missionaries introduced formal

education as a strategy for evangelical success (Eshiwani, 1990). The first lessons centered around the three Rs, that is, reading, writing, and arithmetic (Oliver & Atmore, 1981). Later on, formal education was intensified to train people in various skills needed by the colonial government.

The education department, which had been set up in 1911, began to supervise schools in 1918. In 1925, the Education department gave financial grants in aid to voluntary bodies which owned schools such as mission stations, and in 1931, the Kakamega Government School was started. Post school training facilities such as the Bukura Agricultural Institute started in 1923 (Osogo, 1966). Informal indigenous education continued to run parallel with the formal education. At this period, even some of those pupils who attended mission schools continued with their informal education (Chadwick, 1923).

During this time, there were Christians and Moslems as well as followers of the indigenous religion. By 1934, some of the Africans began to form breakaway independent churches (Ogot, 1971; Oliver & Atmore, 1981; Osogo, 1966). Formation of the independent churches was directly influenced by the knowledge of a completely original African church in Ethiopia (Taryor, 1984). In Western Kenya, the 'Dini ya Roho', a Christian breakaway sect was formed in 1934. The 'Dini ya Musambwa', formed by Elijah Masinde in 1948 advocated the return to indigenous practices like wearing

skin clothing and appeasing the ancestors (Osogo, 1966; Ogot, 1981).

In 1931, there was an economic boom when gold was discovered in Kakamega. Mining started in 1931 and thousands of miners and workers put up permanent and semi-permanent buildings. By 1935, mining companies such as Rosterman employed about 6,814 workers of whom 4,515 were Baluyia. Within a decade however, the mines closed down after making a profit of 3,000,000 pounds sterling (Ogot, 1981, Osogo, 1965, 1966; Wagner, 1970). Those who worked in the mines used their income to pay taxes required by the government among other things, and when the mines shut down many left to seek employment on farms far away from their homes in Trans Nzoia and Uasin Gishu (Osogo, 1965).

From the 1930's onwards, markets continued to increase in number and became within easy reach of the people. Those who wanted to go to distant markets could do so by bicycle, train, or bus (Osogo, 1965). Maize production among local farmers, with some exceptions of course, generally increased during this period (Nabudere, 1981). Cotton production in the area increased from 1 million pounds in the 1920's to nearly 24 million in 1937/38.

In 1937, 31,078 males went out to work compared to 4,515 in 1935 (Wagner, 1970). The large size of migrant labor must have had a tremendous impact on family life in the region. Fortunately, during the 1940's and 1950's and

up to independence in 1963, attempts were made by the government to encourage the male population to engage in local agro-commercial activities. Cash crop agriculture was encouraged and land adjudication and registration began. Previously 'use-right' land tenure had been practiced by the people (Lavrijsen, 1984). 'Use Right' tenure refers to a situation whereby a piece of land which is communally owned, belongs to an individual only when his/her crops are on it.

On the political stage, Mumia retired as paramount chief in 1926. The Wanga empire which collapsed in 1937 was coming to an end. By 1936, the local leaders, 'lugongo', were selected by the government to run the affairs of the people. The post of 'lugongo' was later referred to as 'headman' and at around 1963, as 'sub chief' (Osogo,1966).

Following the end of the first world war, the colonial government had encouraged British war veterans to settle in Kenya. As land pressure increased, indigenous Kenyans began to get together and form groups. The major aim of the groups was to protect their land from further alienation by the colonial administration. The young Kavirondo Association with political aims was formed in 1920.

In 1923, Archdeacon Owen persuaded the leaders of the association to transform it from a political into a welfare body. The body was then renamed the Kavirondo Taxpayers Welfare Association (K.T.W.A.). The objectives of the welfare body included the provision of housing, education

and clothing for the indigenous people (Middleton, 1965). The 'clothing' mentioned in this instance referred to European forms of dress. By 1945, new leaders in the association were more interested in national political organizations and less in welfare bodies. The K.T.W.A. therefore disintegrated following Owen's death in 1945.

In 1946, the Kenya National Study Union changed its name to the Kenya African Union and supported E.W. Mathu as the first and at that time only African member of the country's legislative council. Later in 1952, W.W.W. Awori from Western Kenya joined the legislative council. Independence did not come until 12th December 1963 when Jomo Kenyatta assumed presidency of the country (Amin & Eames, 1988; Italiaander, 1961; Nabudere, 1981, 1982; Ogot, 1981; Osogo, 1965, 1966; Rinehart, 1983; Singh, 1969; Were and Wilson, 1977).

CHAPTER 4

ETHNOGRAPHY OF THE BALUYIA

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the ethnography of the Baluyia will be addressed. Although the work on dress in Kakamega is still in its infancy, from the ethnographies and other written material on the people, several meaningful insights into the changing culture and values of the people can be seen to be manifest in their dress.

The Baluyia in the past have been referred to as the 'Bantu of North Kavirondo', the 'Bantu of North Nyanza', and the 'Bantu of Western Kenya'. Variations of the name 'Baluyia' include, 'Abaluyia', meaning 'fellow tribesmen' (Osogo, 1966) and 'Luyia'. Bantu languages have changeable prefixes. For example the plural of the people is Baluyia, one of the people is 'Muluyia', the language, 'Luluyia' and the country is referred to as 'Buluyia' among the local people.

4.2 The Baluyia culture.

The following are some of the Baluyia customs during the period covered by this study.

Marriage was not permitted between members of the same clan. The parents of the prospective bride and groom would

arrange the marriage. It was also possible for a prospective groom to look for his prospective bride. Prior to the marriage, private inquiries would be made by both families into the characters of the prospective bride and groom. Only when both parties were satisfied would the dowry payment commence. Dowry was paid by the man to the woman's family in the form of hoes and/or livestock. Hoes were valuable in the late nineteenth century because they were manufactured by only one Baluyia clan (Abang'ale). The Baluyia were cultivators and owning good hoes ensured the success of a crop (Osogo, 1966; Wagner, 1970).

The family consisted of the husband, wife or wives and unmarried children. The married son could continue to live in his parents' compound until he set up his own compound. The married daughters would live in their husbands' home. If a man had more than one wife, each wife had her own house although the houses could be in the same compound. Each person belonged to an age group called 'Likhula', 'oluse', or 'olubaka'. The people of the same likhula were usually born in the same year, and were initiated and grew up together doing the same kinds of things (Osogo, 1965; Wagner, 1970).

Each age group had a role to play in the society. From the late nineteenth century until about 1920, the roles were briefly as follows.

The women's role was to care for children, do the

family cooking, plaster the houses, and tend the farm by planting and weeding. The role of men included clearing land for cultivation, building the family house, defending the state in times of war, and providing meat for the family by hunting. The male youth took care of livestock, and joined their fathers in hunts and wars.

The female youth helped their mothers in performing many tasks in the home and farm. The children did not have any fixed tasks as such but they played and minded their younger siblings. Children were, however, considered very precious as it was through them that society was reproduced. Every adult was considered to be responsible for the welfare of the society's children. The chief role of the elderly women was to guard the virtue of the girls and educate them about responsibilities that society required of them. The elderly men did likewise with the boys, but in addition formed the judiciary of the society. Old age was considered synonymous with wisdom.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the family house was built in the following way:
The houses were round and made of sticks plastered with mud. The mud would be smoothed and then decorated with artistic designs in different colored clays. The houses were thatched with grass or the more hardy 'tsimuli' (a type of grass). The mud floor was compacted hard, and kept very smooth. There was one door, and openings were kept between

the top of the wall and the roof for ventilation purposes (see Figure 1, Appendix 9).

By the third decade of the twentieth century, some of the customs relating to the family were different. Due to the introduction of hut tax by the colonial administration, men went in search of paid employment on the European owned farms or in the towns (Wagner, 1970; Nabudere, 1981). Wives, for the most part, continued to live in their parents-in-laws' home. During this period, according to employment figures (Wagner, 1970), it was not common for women to leave their homes on their own in search of paid employment. The men were therefore expected to dress their female folk as they had access to money income.

Although Kenya was already a British colony, it was during the period of the Second World War (1939-1945) rather than the First World War (1914-1918) that record numbers of men left the villages and went to fight for the British Empire (Moyse-Bartlett, 1956). With readjustments to be made in the home, it is inevitable that family roles also changed. Thus as the men left, women had to take on more roles which had traditionally been reserved for the men (Ogot, 1971).

Village life in general also continued to undergo changes. For example, the house building techniques were modified (Burt, 1980). Mission schools taught carpentry among other trades and house doors were increasingly made of

wood instead of the wickerwork by the late nineteenth century. The walls were built higher and cooking was done in a separate house (Wagner, 1970). The separate cooking area caused the main house to change from a predominantly female to a predominantly male domain, as women spent more time in the cooking house. These changes in community life as a whole correlated positively with changes in dress as will be seen in Chapter 5.

The African teachers built square houses out of brick with corrugated iron roofs, and surrounded them with lawns and flower gardens as the missionaries did (Wagner, 1970; Burt, 1980). By 1963, however, some families had built self-contained houses. Not all families built their houses in a single style and by 1963, all the types of houses that have been described above were in evidence in the district.

By 1963, customs relating to marriage were slightly different from those in the earlier part of the century. Although marriage between persons of the same clan was still prohibited, dowry could be paid both in cattle as well as in money income. The common forms of marriage in the district by this period included marriage by capture, Baluyia traditional marriage, the Christian marriage, and the Muslim marriage. The marriage by capture was different from traditional marriage in that it was more informal. Marriage by capture was a forceful abducting of a bride for whom no dowry had been paid (Osogo, 1965).

By 1963, people of the same age group no longer did most things together as in the past. Hunting was no longer a communal activity as government health laws stipulated that people eat inspected meat only (Wagner,1970). In Kakamega district, the Islamic people usually slaughtered the livestock since they had a taboo against eating meat killed by a non-Muslim.

The men in the society continued to leave their homes in search of paid employment in order to pay taxes and pay school fees for their children. Roles of family members by 1963 were thus not exactly the same as in the earlier parts of the century. More children were attending formal education as opposed to informal education, and the elders therefore had fewer learners to teach. The women who did not accompany their husbands, brothers or fathers to their place of employment continued to tend the homes and farms.

According to Stam (1910), Baluyia religious beliefs in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century included the worship of a supreme being. The supreme being was the creator of everything and bringer of good luck, and was called 'Were', 'Wele', or 'Nyasae'. Because 'Were' was a bringer of good, 'Were' was not sacrificed to, but was thanked every morning by the person facing and spitting to the East, West, North and South. Bringers of bad luck were ancestor spirits and so they had to be appeased with frequent sacrifices of livestock. Each family had a place

to make sacrifices and the head priest was referred to as the 'mumali we misango' (appeaser of spirits). With the advent of other religions like Christianity and Islam, by 1963, a sizable number of people in the community had converted to the new religions.

Birth.

Among the Baluyia, childbirth had a twofold significance. It was through birth that a man and a woman acquired the status of parenthood, and a new individual entered the community. Childbirth established a system of new social relationships, and respect for a family increased according to the number of its members. The Baluyia are patrilineal and patrilocal and therefore a child took the clan of its father.

The naming of a child was carried out in the following way: For a male child, the naming ceremony took place early in the morning. Standing in front of the door the mother would hold the child and in the presence of the father, the grandfather would put an iron bracelet on the child's wrist, bless the child and then give him a name. A female child was named inside the house in the evening after the sun had set. The grandfather would bless the child and give her a name, but no bracelet was put on her wrist (Wagner, 1970). The birth of twins was considered a blessing only if they were fraternal. Identical twins were looked upon with

suspicion as they could conspire to bring ill luck to the parents (Chadwick, 1923).

Death.

According to Baluyia legend, there was no death for all mankind in the beginning. Then one day, a chameleon said to one man "Bring me a pot of beer". The chameleon crept to the beerpot and took a bath in the beer. After the bath, the chameleon ordered the man to drink the beer. Due to man's natural abhorrence of the chameleon and thinking him to be poisonous, the man refused to drink the beer. On his refusal, the chameleon said to him that from that day onwards, people would die (Stam, 1919-20).

There was also a belief that people died to become ancestral spirits. Thus bodily death was not thought to terminate the existence of the human individual. Physical death was looked upon as a break in the existence of an individual, a turning point that involved a change for the worse. Consequently death invoked a feeling of initial restlessness and resentment in the deceased towards the surviving relatives whom he or she tended to hold responsible for the fate that had overtaken him or her. In death the deceased continued to wield power over the living and thus had to be frequently appeased (Wagner, 1970).

The moment of death was marked by sudden and violent bursts of wailing by the relatives. Ceremonial songs and

dances would be performed in honor of the deceased after which the burial would follow. If the deceased was an important man or woman in the community, a feast would be held on the anniversary of his or her death. By 1963, most of the beliefs and practices relating to death had changed. The missionaries discouraged the converts from practicing indigenous customs and beliefs (Burt, 1980; Kuper, 1973; Thurnwald, 1935; Wipper, 1972). The converts therefore became increasingly Anglicized in their ways, including their dress forms.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

During this study, it was difficult to assign exact dates to the periods when specific dress forms were worn. One reason is that time, especially in the pre-colonial past was calculated according to seasons and important events and not by calendar days. A second reason is that from the available data it was not possible to ascertain beyond reasonable doubt the exact date and sometimes calendar year when a particular dress form first appeared. In many instances informants used events such as 'famines', the 'First or Second World War', or when they were 'about x years old' etc. to refer to a period. Thus instead of assigning specific dates to the periods in the study, approximate dates have been used under headings that portray significant events in the society.

This chapter on research findings will comprise four sections. The first section is entitled 'Long ago' and it embraces dress in the late 1880's up to approximately 1918. In this section, dress is discussed in relation to the indigenous government, the coming of missionaries, foreign administrators and indirect rule, education and local culture among others. This was the period that witnessed

the arrival of and subsequent settlement in the district of many non-African visitors from foreign lands. The foreigners included explorers, Christian missionaries, administrators, and traders among others. Some of the visitors left written records of what they saw.

The second section is entitled 'Mulama's declaration'. This section includes dress from approximately 1918 to the early 1930's. The impact of Chief Mulama's declaration on dress forms as well as the styles of the day are discussed.

The third section is entitled 'Fashion and suicide and song'. This section includes dress from approximately the mid 1930's to the early 1950's. The styles of the day, dress-related suicides of some girls and women, as well as songs composed about dress are discussed.

The fourth section is entitled 'Towards independence'. This section encompasses dress from approximately the early 1950's to independence in 1963. The dress forms worn as well as the continuous influence of socio-cultural factors on dress are discussed.

SECTION 1

5.2 Long Ago

When was 'long ago' from a clothing perspective in Kakamega district? From evidence gathered, it appears to have been the period from the late 1800's to the early 1900's. When interviewing elderly informants of about 80 or over 90 years old, they had a tendency to describe the period under discussion as 'long ago' or 'in the days of our grand-fathers'. Although the informants in this study were not completely certain of the exact numerical years in those long ago days, they were certain of the sequence of events.

In the days before British administration, passage of time was recorded by seasons and major events such as wars, famines, circumcisions, epidemics and so on. Osogo (1966) used these major events together with known family lineages to construct a chronology of events for Western Kenya prior to British rule. It is the Osogo chronology that has been used in the 'long ago' period.

This was the period when the smallest unit of government was the 'olukongo' which consisted of several villages in a ridge or valley. The Nabongo (king) Mumia also ruled Wanga in the district at this time. Hunting was a common practice among the men and apart from meat, items pertaining to dress were also objectives of hunts. Trade was by barter and this basically took place in the village.

Markets which were few and far away functioned during periods of scarcity. In 1901, the Uganda railway (see Map 6 p. 44) reached Kisumu and a branch was extended to Butere in Kakamega district. Trading centers grew up around the railway stations.

Between 1884 and 1885, the Berlin conference laid down rules for the partition of Africa by European states, Kenya was declared a British protectorate, and in February of the same year, C.W. Hobley, was sent to Mumias as a subcommissioner to open up an administrative headquarter (Hobley, 1970; Ogot, 1980; Stein, 1985). The establishment of British rule, however, only began to make itself felt with the introduction of a hut tax in 1899 (Wagner, 1970). In 1909, the British wanted to extend indirect rule over the area through chiefs appointed by Nabongo Mumia of Wanga. Mumia of Wanga was therefore nominated to rule over the whole of Buluyia (the country).

During the 1880's and 1890's, Swahili and Arab caravan traffic increased substantially due to Maasai decline and a center of Islamic influence was established at Mumias by the 1890's (Hemphill, 1963).

In 1905 many competing mission stations were established in the district. The mission stations continued to multiply rapidly over the following decade. In 1905 there were 3 mission stations in the district, and by 1922 there were 12 mission stations (Wagner, 1970). The major

aim of the missionaries was to spread Christianity to the people. The missionaries also introduced formal education.

Initially formal education was not popular. It was looked upon with suspicion, and parents preferred to send their sons rather than their daughters to school. This could have been due to parents' protectiveness towards daughters, the fear that they could come to harm in a strange place, whereas boys were considered to be able to take care of themselves. Later, as the benefits of literacy began to be seen, formal education gained popularity. In 1875 when the explorer, Henry Morton Stanley was circumnavigating Lake Victoria (Stanley, 1875), he touched on the Baluyia settlement areas of Mageta and Manyara Bay (now Berkeley Bay). Although this region is not in present day Kakamega, Stanley's historical observation is important for this study because it mentions some items of Baluyia dress of the day.

> This was the land of Maheta [Mageta], we were told... where we saw a denser population and more clusters of large villages than we had beheld elsewhere... We anchored 50 yards away... Some half dozen men wearing small land shells above their elbows and a circle of them around their heads came to the brink... (Stanley, 1875, p. 149)

Joseph Thomson, another explorer who passed through the region that is present day Kakamega wrote the following on dress:

> The Wakavirondo [Baluyia of North Kavirondo] delight in getting themselves up in the most fantastic head dresses: antelopes horns, cocks tail feathers, basket

> and leather work are enlisted to give the most awe inspiring effects.
>
> (Thomson, 1885, p. 155)

On seeing the girls in their dress, Thomson wrote:

> It was now my turn to feel a measure of astonishment, awkwardness and bashfulness as I found myself surrounded by... girls whose clothes and ornaments consisted simply of a string of beads. I had much to do to keep my countenance, and was at a loss where to look. Gradually, however, I gave up stargazing and before long it seemed the most natural thing in the world to dress in that way.
>
> (Thomson, 1885, p. 154)

Joseph Thomson was traveling from Britain during the Victorian Era (1837-1901). The Victorian Era was known for its modest and prim attitudes which were manifest in the British manner of dress at that time. Victorian female dress was long and covered most parts of the body. Thus the dress style of the Baluyia girls caused Thomson to feel shy. According to Kaiser (1990) a person's culture may lead him or her to think differently about dress because of their varying social backgrounds and experiences.

However, before long, Thomson got used to the different style of dress and concluded that:

> ...about the Kavirondo it remains but to be said that they eloquently illustrate the fact which some people cannot understand that morality has nothing to do with clothes...
>
> (Thomson, 1995, p. 159)

Although Thomson may have found the dress of females in the district to be scant, great importance and meaning was attached to this seemingly scant dress by the people. The importance will be seen in the second section of this

discussion. Below are forms of dress which were worn in the district during this period (1880's-1918). The descriptions of dress have been classified by gender, age, status and occasion. The reason for this classification is that from data collected, these factors appear to have influenced the dress worn by individuals. Dress will be discussed under the headings of women, girls, men, boys, babies, rulers, war and marriage (All figures in this study are found in appendix 9).

Dress of Women

The review of literature revealed that the main dress of the women in Kakamega district during the period referred to as 'long ago' was called the 'liboya' (Burt, 1980; Osogo, 1965, 1966; Wagner, 1977). During the field research, however, it became apparent that the women's main dress was made up of two items with different names which were always worn together. The two items were the 'shiboya' and the 'liboya'. In this study, the 'shiboya and liboya' will be collectively taken to mean 'one' item of dress unless otherwise stated.

The shiboya which looked like a string apron was worn around the waist and fell to the front of the body (see Figure 2). The liboya which was made in the form of a tuft was also tied around the waist but fell to the back of the body (see Figure 3). None of the informants could recall

the length of the shiboya and liboya as falling below the knees. Probably that would have been a rare occurrence. The seven samples of shiboya and liboya that were examined at the National Museum collection during this study, measured 14-32 cm.long which would fall above the knee for an average-sized female.

The person's gender influenced the dress forms worn. Male and female members of a community could be distinguished by the manner in which they dressed. The shiboya and liboya was a very important item of women's dress and had to be respected accordingly (Osogo, 1966). It was taboo for an adult male person to touch a woman's shiboya and liboya as this act was tantamount to rape (Burt, 1980). A taboo is any prohibition resulting from social or other conventions.

The shiboya and liboya could be made of various materials depending on the occasion as well as a woman's economic status. Papyrus reeds 'amaturu' were the most commonly used. Animal tail hairs were used for making a very expensive shiboya and liboya. Banana fibers which were easier to get were also used. Banana fibers appear to have been more widely used especially for temporary dress such as a new mother would use during her time of confinement (S. Nafula, pers. comm. Nov. 1991).

The sisal plant was also used to make a fuller shiboya and liboya called 'owuyo'. 'Owuyo ' was used for happy

occasions such as weddings and ceremonies which involved merrymaking. During such occasions, it was fitting for a woman to look and feel her best. During sad occasions such as funerals, women dressed in a different manner. For example, on the death of a husband, a widow would rub mud over herself and male and female mourners would paint themselves with white clay in no particular pattern (Wagner, 1970). The white clay symbolized the spirit world (Burt, 1982). For at home use the shiboya and liboya worn was quite thin and was called 'akhaseche'. See Appendix 3 for more details on the manufacture of shiboya and liboya.

When dressed in the shiboya and liboya, the women had to move carefully to prevent exposing any part of their body that was meant to be covered. If a woman walked fast or danced, the shiboya and liboya, especially the fuller one called 'owuyo', would bounce up and down and thus expose the body parts meant to be covered. To keep the shiboya and liboya in place therefore, women used waist ornaments. The waist ornaments consisted of glass beads on twine, metal beads on leather thongs, or metal chains 'obunyolo' (see Appendix 4 for women's ornaments).

Other ornaments consisted of bells called 'tsindeke' which were tied around the ankles especially during ceremonies where there would be dancing. Carved wooden sticks called 'tsindebe' and rings called 'orukasa' were worn in the ears. Around their necks were necklaces

'emisanga' and 'ebiuma', made of water shells, carved ostrich egg shells, glass beads, or clay beads 'amatongotongo'. Ornaments made of carved ostrich shells were expensive and could be afforded only by women from affluent families. Straight or twisted metal wire with charms hanging on them were also worn around the neck. Some of the charms were used for curing certain ailments. On the upper arms and wrists bands of copper or tin wire called 'ebitiri', or bands of ivory called 'manyonje' were worn. 'Manyonje' and metal bands called 'ongweko' could also be worn on the ankles. (see Figure 4 for full women's dress).

The manner in which the women sat was influenced by the style of dress or vice versa. According to informants, they sat on their heels with their bent legs together and their hands resting on their thighs. The act of sitting or standing was executed using the leg muscles with the back and neck held straight, and always with legs close together. It was taboo to sit with legs apart (see Figure 5).

The women had their foreheads and bellies scarified with designs. Scarification was meant to enhance the beauty of a woman (see Figure 4). Women did not keep their hair long but shaved their heads clean. Then, when the hair began to grow, they would shave around the hairline to give the impression of an oval forehead which was admired in the community (see Figure 6). Alternatively, the hair would be completely shaved off, and when it began to grow, designs

were shaved into the hair 'tsimbeka' (see Figure 7). The shaving was executed by the use of a cast iron razor blade 'olumwo' made by local blacksmiths (see Figure 8). An elderly woman of over fifty (Osogo, 1965) left her hair short and did not shave designs in it.

During this time, it was uncommon for the local women to wear tailored garments although they were available in major towns such as Mombasa, Nairobi and Kisumu. Nasio Ndula of Musanda (pers. comm. 1989), who was born at around 1885, recalled the following story from her childhood: Nasio said that when her older neighbor, Nasiche, came back from her visit in distant parts wearing a tailored dress, the whole village was shocked. In those days, everyone knew that only men wore tailored garments. Nasiche was ordered to give the 'kanzu' to her father, which she did. In those days women rarely wore tailored garments and so the elders did not realize that Nasiche's 'Kanzu' was probably a tailored dress for women. That was when the 'kofia mbili' people had just come. British administration was established in North Kavirondo at Mumias in 1895 (Ogot, 1981; Osogo, 1966). 'Kofia mbili' which translates as 'two hats ' was a term that was used to refer to the British Administrators who wore double terai hats in order to protect their heads from the sun (Trzebinsky, 1986).

Girls' dress

In the 'long ago' period, age was a consideration in the manner in which a female dressed. Until they reached puberty, girls wore strings of beads around their waists and necks. Puberty was marked by the menstrual period, after which a girl became a woman and was expected to behave like one. Carl Peters, a German administrator who passed through the district while signing treaties with rulers in 1897, noted that although girls did not wear a shiboya and liboya, all married women did (Osogo, 1966).

Girls also wore armlets and anklets and sometimes a cowrie shell on their foreheads. The anklet known as 'ongweko' was only worn by women and older girls who were approaching puberty. The semi-circular 'ongweko' anklets were worn on each ankle and could sometimes hook into each other and cause the inexperienced wearer to trip. 'Wifwalire ongweko nikakhumoche!' which translates to 'you dared to wear 'ongweko'!' was a statement which would be made in anger to a youngster as it was an unspoken taboo for children to wear 'ongweko' ankle bands (Maria Saleh, pers. comm. Nov, 1991). Girls' hair was fashioned like the women's hair (see Figures 6 and 7).

Elizabeth Chadwick, a missionary in the district from 1915, writes that girls and women in contact with the mission were encouraged to cover up more (1917). According to the ethnographic data, some woven fabrics were initially

supplied by mission stations and then people were encouraged to purchase fabrics from the local traders.

Men's dress

The basic men's dress was called 'lisero' (Burt, 1980, 1982; Osogo, 1965). 'Lisero' differed according to a man's socio-economic status. For example, a rich man who owned many cattle could afford to wear a 'lisero' made of calf hide. 'Lisero' for the ordinary man was made of goat hide which was softened by rubbing and oiling with ghee (K. Werima, pers. comm. Nov, 1991; Vaughan-Kirby, 1918). Ghee is clarified butter. A leather thong was passed through the hide at the front of the body and over the arm and fastened back onto the hide at the back to keep it from falling (see Figure 9).

The basic men's garment was a kind of 'mobile' dress. Why mobile? Because the garment shifted according to the context in which it was being worn. The 'lisero' was tied above one shoulder and the goat hide being quite small only covered half of the person. When a man approached his mother-in-law, aunts or women belonging to his mother's clan, he would quickly shift the garment and put the thong around his neck so as to make sure that it covered his front. Long ago, the people put great value on politeness and courtesy and it was taboo to pass by anyone along the path without a greeting (Mzee Opaka, pers. comm. Nov. 1991).

As part of the greeting, one had to say something about where they were coming from. It was a way of ensuring that each traveler learnt something about the destination to which they were headed. It was also a way of ascertaining whether the other person was friendly or a potential enemy. Supposing the other traveler whom a man met was any of the above mentioned women, as he would make way for the other traveler to pass after the customary greeting, he would slowly rotate his garment to cover himself as the woman passed. On the other hand, if the other traveler who was met was a fellow male or a female who did not fall into the above-mentioned category, his appearance was acceptable and the ceremony involving shifting of the 'lisero' was not necessary (Burt, 1980, 1982; Osogo, 1965; Mzee Opaka, W. Luchiri, J. Shikwati, pers. comm. Nov./Dec. 1991)

Age as well as status were contributing factors in the manner in which men dressed. According to the older informants, elders (over fifty years old) dressed in a 'lisero' made from the larger calf hide as opposed to the smaller 'goat' hide despite their socio-economic status. Calf hide is bigger than goat hide and it therefore covered the whole body and the wearer did not have to keep turning it.

Although an affluent younger man could wear 'lisero' from cow hide, his status mattered, as the young man in question should first have been initiated. An uninitiated

man could not wear the dress of the initiated no matter what his age was (Roscoe, 1909). Initiation for men took the form of circumcision, or the removal of the four lower teeth (Burt, 1980; Osogo, 1965; Wagner,1970).

Men also wore cow skin sandals held together by leather thongs to protect their feet from thorns during war, hunts, and on journeys. There was no evidence found to suggest that women wore sandals. During beer parties men, especially elders, carried a personal 3-legged stool to sit on, and sometimes, a leather bag 'eshisikolo' in which they kept snuff among other personal effects (see Figure 10). Towards the late nineteenth century, elders draped blankets called 'shiboko' which were red in color. The 'shiboko' blankets were very strong and could last for at least eight years. The blankets were sold by Indian traders traveling in ox-wagons prior to the building of the railway (Mzee Opaka, K. Ramadhan, pers. com. Nov 1991).

The men who were elders kept their hair short. The younger men kept their hair much longer than that of women, in order to stick feathers and other ornaments into it. The younger men adorned their hair during occasions such as dances, ceremonies, or war. Figure eleven (11) from Stam (1910) fits the descriptions that were received from informants on the manner in which young men would dress when going to a social gathering.

Some of the ornaments such as the bead necklaces, and

ear rings called 'orukasa', were worn by men and women alike. In addition, men of high status wore ear ornaments called 'obukaka' made from beads threaded on cow tail hairs. 'Obukaka' ear ornaments were worn especially by a father during his son's initiation ceremony (see Figure 12). Although men also wore wristlets, armlets and anklets like women, theirs appear to have been thicker and heavier than those worn by women (See Appendices 5 and 6 for manufacture and examples of iron ornaments).

Other decoration was used at specific rites of passage. For example, there was a funeral dance called 'omwimo' which was held on behalf of a dead elder at his home. This dance is rare today. At this dance, men would wear a 'lisero' and decorate their whole bodies with dots made from red ocher, white river clay 'ipala,' and black river clay 'itsiibe'. They also wore headgear of colorful feathers placed on a ring 'ingara' (see Figure 13). Male informants were reluctant to discuss more on this subject; however, female informants said male informants should be asked for details. Therefore this line of questioning was stopped due to limited field time.

The four oldest informants who were from different parts of the district mentioned the following story. Before the railway reached Butere, Indian traders on oxcarts, 'vehicles with houses on top and drawn by oxen held together with pieces of wood,' would come laden with fabrics and

other commodities for sale like china, salt, and sugar.

Although the traders sold woven fabrics, few people bought them as they had an offensive 'smell'. The 'smell' was probably due to the dyes used. The most likely dye used was indigo which is blue or brown. When the traders first came, they would travel from Kisumu and stop briefly at Maseno, Yala, Butere and Mumias and other trading centers before returning to Kisumu (then called Port Florence). After the railway reached Butere in 1901, a few Indian traders set up permanent shops. The first was in Fort Maxted (now the town of Kakamega) in 1903 (Wagner, 1970). The Indians then employed indigenous drivers from Kisumu to bring them stock using oxcarts covered with papyrus mats to protect the goods.

According to one informant, the first non-African traders in Butere before 1918, were Bwana Kubwa (translates as big man), Jaffer, and Mohammed Vunja. Mohammed Vunja ('Vunja' translates as 'he who breaks'), was not popular because:

> He would cut the fabric to the size that he felt like, even if it was smaller than what a person wanted. Then he would force the customer to buy it. He was very strong and liked to fight if the customer tried to bargain with him. Jaffer and Bwana Kubwa on the other hand were hospitable. They made a customer feel so at home that he or she would end up buying items that had not been originally intended. Jaffer was kind to children and thus a child would insist that the parent shopped at Jaffer's...
>
> (Mzee Opaka, personal comm, Dec. 1991).

In 1909, the British extended indirect rule over the

district through chiefs appointed by Nabongo Mumia. A brick headquarters was built at Mumias in the same year (Osogo, 1966) and it still stands today. The guards who were employed at the headquarters dressed in the following manner. They wore khaki shirts and shorts with a rope at the waist that would be pulled tight to hold up the trousers. They also wore hats called 'turuki' which were cone-shaped with a flattened top, red in color and had a tassel hanging down. The guards were known as 'askari kanga' or administrative police and their uniform was supplied by the British administrators.

Boys' dress

In the 'long ago period', age was a factor in male dress as well as female. Until the age of about 17, boys did not cover their bodies with 'lisero'. According to photographic data from the archives, Osogo, (1965), and informants, the boys dressed in a wide strap of leather held by a string around the waist and passing between their legs called 'esikhonera' (see Figure 14). The boys who had regular contact with mission stations in the early 1900's were encouraged to drape a fabric around their waists (see Figure 15).

Babies' dress.

Babies did not need to be dressed. The concept of 'unclad' did not apply to those under the age of 16. When a child was born, a naming ceremony was held in which the male (but not female) child would be dressed with a bracelet (Wagner, 1970). Both male and female babies would later be dressed in bells called 'tsindeke'. A bell or bells would be tied onto one ankle or one wrist. The purpose was to encourage babies to learn to crawl or walk sooner since when they moved the bells tinkled. The babies liked the tinkling sound and were thus encouraged to keep moving (see Figure 16).

However, for one clan in Kakamega, the Abakhoone, dressing babies in bells was a taboo. The reason Abakhoone did not use bells is linked back to the mid 1800's when the Abakhoone were attacked and decimated by the Banyala (Osogo, 1965, 1966). Abakhoone women and children hid in the swamps but the tinkling bells caused the attackers to locate and kill them. From that time, 'tsindeke' bells became a taboo to members of the Abakhoone clan.

Dress of rulers.

Rulers in the district included the Nabongo (king), chiefs as well as headmen or 'lukongo'. From the photographs collected, the Nabongo appears to be dressed in more layers of dress than the other men (see Figure 17).

During long ago, the ruler would dress in royal robes when important occasions warranted it. The particular robes in Figure 18 date back to the late 1700's. These robes were and still are special. They are still used for the coronation ceremony or important occasions. For example, when the British appointed the Nabongo as paramount chief in 1909, the royal robes were brought out and worn for the occasion. When not in use, the royal robes were and are still stored.

The royal robes are stored in a clay pot which is sealed and kept in a bigger clay pot which is sealed and inverted into a third, larger clay pot (see Figure, 18). The third pot is kept buried under the floor of the Nabongo's (king's) mother's or senior wife's house.

The Nabongo dressed in a thick cloak. The cloak had long black hairs with a speckling of white dots (the natural color of the fur). The cloak which was known as 'iyamwamu', was made of several skins of a forest animal locally known as 'iyamwamu'.

There was conflicting data on exactly what animal the 'iyamwamu' was. Some informants said it was a type of monkey, others disagreed vehemently. Among those who said it was a monkey, some claimed that it was a Colobus monkey but others refuted the claim. However, they all agreed that the 'iyamwamu' animal lived in the forests along River Yala in the district. Osogo (1970) suggested Colobus monkey fur

'ikutusi' was used for a leader's cloak.

The skins used in the cloak were neatly sewn together and beads were sewn around the edges for decoration. Over this cloak the Nabongo wore a leopard skin cloak 'ingwe', and a cowrie shell cap 'shimwata' which had a wooden protuberance mounted with the tail feathers of a rare bird (see Figure 19). The rare bird is probably extinct or no longer occurring in the area and it was not possible to get any information on it.

The Nabongo (king) also wore a heavy royal bangle on his arm made of copper and called 'omukasa', as well as ivory armlets. The royal bangle was symbolic of leadership. It was taken off the dead king and put on the wrist of his successor during the coronation ceremony. The royal bangle was heavily guarded by the king's loyal counselors after his death. The reason was that if any male descendant possessed it, he could declare himself ruler, even though he had not been named successor by his late father. Although there was no other official Nabongo after Mumia, the ceremony of passing on the royal bangle still continues to this day after the death of an heir in the former Nabongo's family (this is symbolic as Nabongos no longer rule Buluyia today). The king also always carried a staff known as 'indabushi ya oburuchi', which loosely translates to 'the staff of kingship'.

Sakwa, a brother of Nabongo Shiundu had in 1884

declared himself ruler of an area a few miles from present day Mumias. According to Osogo (1966), when Carl Peters, the German administrator visited the district in 1890, he described Sakwa as wearing a shirt of cotton fabric, a great bronze chain around his neck, profuse artistic copper rings ornamenting his arms, and carrying a lance in his right hand. The 'shirt of cotton fabric' was most likely a 'kanzu'.

The council of elders who advised the King also dressed in thick fur 'iyamwamu'. The elders did not wear much ornamentation apart from armlets. Among the Baluyia in the past, it was not fitting for an elder male to decorate himself like a younger man (Burt, 1980). The elephant ivory armlets were of a deep yellow-orange color due to ageing.

Each elder of high status owned a four legged stool as opposed to the three legged stools of ordinary men. These stools made up part of the portfolio of an elder and were an extension of their dress. The elders also carried a staff called an 'indabushi'.

In the photographs dated 1908 (see Figures 20 and 21), both Nabongo Mumia and his brother Chief Murunga are dressed in a 'kanzu' (the light colored inner garment), a 'lichoo' (dark colored decorated outer garment), and a turban 'shiremba' on their heads. The king carries a cane with a rounded top 'eshikongo ', another symbol of office. In the microfilm photograph album of Mrs. E.O. Ashton (nee Thurlow)

at the Kenya National archives taken in Kenya between 1900-1909, there were photographs of men dressed similarly. The caption below a photograph of a man dressed in the above manner reads 'Full dress of a Mohammedan gentleman.'

The 'kanzu', a long shirt-like garment is Mohammedan or Islamic in influence. According to the informants, the ruler and his council of elders and chiefs each had a 'kanzu' as part of his wardrobe. The exact time that leaders began to dress in a 'kanzu' is not clear as they had done so even before the advent of Islam into the district. There is evidence that in the reign of Nabongo Shiundu in the 1840's, the Baluyia were trading with the coastal Swahilis (Burke, 1976).

Dress for War

Before British administration (pre 1905), men going to war applied various colored ocher all over their bodies and wore tall headdresses to increase their height and sense of importance. The headdresses were made of warthog tusks or feathers of various birds. They carried shields and the war spear called 'lisakha'. 'Lisakha' had many points (see Figure 22) in order that it did not miss the victim. The shield was almost as long as the man and this was in order to protect him from enemy spears (see Figures 23 & 24).

The commander wore 'isimbishira' and a cowrie shell cap (see Figures 19 & 25). According to informants, the Abamia

(or Teso), were a formidable enemy. Their headdresses were made of long grass and when they lay still in the tall elephant grass, their camouflage was so effective that it was very easy to unknowingly walk right in their midst. Then they would strike.

In 1914, during the First World War (locally known as the war of the Germans), a number of Baluyia men were hired by the British. Elizabeth Chadwick (Easter, 1917) writes that another thousand men from the district alone (8,000 from the province), had already been called out for the Carrier Corps in British East Africa.

During World War I (1914-1918), the British supplied the recruits with uniforms which included khaki shorts and shirts (Moyse-Bartlett, 1956). Those men who returned from the war in 1918, continued to dress in these Khaki uniforms. This particular khaki was called 'khaki jela' and was a very strong fabric that could be purchased from local shops. 'Khaki jela' fabric was heavier than that used in the administrative police uniforms. Returning war veterans in 1918 came back with their salaries to spend as they pleased. In the same year (1918), there occurred the 'famine of Ngaira' in the district. Ngaira was a rainmaker who had died (Osogo, 1965). Many veterans bought more livestock as a man's status could go up according to the number of his livestock which meant that his household would not starve.

Dressing for marriage.

For marriage, the man and his close friends would wear their best 'lisero' or draped 'shiboko' blanket, and their ornaments. The bride had her skin scrubbed down with cold hard millet (boiled the night before) and oiled with ghee until she shone. She would be dressed in her best shiboya and liboya as well as all her ornaments. Sesame seeds were sprinkled on her from head to foot. Because of the ghee on her skin the seeds clung to her body. As the bride walked slowly, and shyly [it was unheard of for a bride to walk fast or not to look shy even if she did not necessarily feel shy], the seeds would drop one by one from her body. The expression used for describing the bride was whispered in admiration by the wedding guests, 'omweya aronya', which loosely translates as 'sesame dropping off the bride' (Jane Nandwa, pers. comm. 1990).

It is interesting to note that the same expression is still used today among the Baluyia to describe a bride during the wedding ceremony. Yet girls now wear white lace dresses and nets and sesame (simsim) seeds are only sprinkled over them after the wedding ceremony.

Conclusion

In this first section, research findings on dress worn during 'long ago' from 1883 to around 1918 have been discussed. During this period, it was evident that people

dressed according to their age, gender, and status. For example, an uninitiated male was forbidden to wear the dress of the initiated, and a female who had not reached puberty was forbidden to wear the women's dress consisting of shiboya and liboya. Economic status also influenced dress worn. For example, a woman from an affluent family could afford the more expensive shiboya made from animal tail hairs. The occasion was an influencing factor as well. For example, people dressed differently during funerals, dances, or at home. In this period, increasing numbers of foreigners were arriving in the district. The foreigners introduced other forms of dress depending on their culture and values. However, at this time, the majority of people still wore locally made indigenous dress. A few wore robes imported from distant lands via the Kenya coast.

SECTION 2

5.3 Mulama's declaration

In this section, the impact of Chief Mulama's declaration on dress as well as the historical series of dress forms in the same period (1918-early 1930's) are discussed. During the years of British indirect rule, Nabongo Mumia ruled Western Kenya from 1909-1937, and appointed his brothers to rule various parts of the district as chiefs. For example, Mumia's brother Mulama was the chief of Butere, another brother Murunga the chief of Bungoma and so on (see Map 1).

Chief Mulama was a very dynamic ruler and is remembered for his ideas. He recognized the importance of a formal education in the future of the country and encouraged children to attend school. The Church Mission Society was established in Western Kenya in 1905 (Wagner, 1970). In 1912, the Church Mission Society was requested to open a school by the colonial government (Ogot, 1971), and Chief Mulama, the brother of Nabongo Mumia, offered a site at Butere. Chief Mulama would personally take prospective pupils to the mission school in Butere (Chadwick papers, 1920).

There was already a Catholic mission in Mumias. Butere was outside the ten mile radius which was then agreed on by the different Christian denominations to avoid overlap. For

several miles, around the mission station, village schools and churches were founded by converts and work was carried out on a self help basis (Ogot, 1971).

The missionaries appear to have got on well with Chief Mulama. In the Chadwick papers (1917-1924), he is frequently mentioned; for example when Elizabeth Chadwick and other missionaries were having a picnic on the banks of River Yala, Chief Mulama drove by in his car and they waved happily at him. The photographs that I have seen of Chief Mulama show him early in the 1920's dressed in full Mohammedan gentleman's dress i.e. a light colored 'kanzu' and a dark embroidered robe over it (Ashton, 1900-1927). Later in the 1940's he appears dressed in three-piece suits of British styling (see Figure 26). Chief Mulama associated closely with missionaries and the British administration and that could have influenced him to change his dress style from Mohammedan to European (British).

The Kabaka (king) of Buganda, a kingdom in Uganda was a good friend of Chief Mulama. Informants referred to him as 'the kabaka'. This 'kabaka' was most likely Kabaka Daudi Chwa who ruled Buganda from 1897-1939 (Low 1971) after his father Kabaka Mwanga was deported to the Seychelles by the British.

In approximately 1919, Chief Mulama went to visit his friend the Kabaka of Buganda. While he was there, he noticed that the women in Buganda dressed in long garments

called 'gomas' (see Figure 27). Mulama had by then embraced the Protestant faith which encouraged women to cover up a large part of their bodies including their breasts. At the time local women dressed in a shiboya and liboya (see Figure 4), which left the breasts bare. According to the older male informants, the kabaka confided in Mulama that news had reached him that foreigners were mocking Mulama's women subjects because of their dress style. The visit made a great impression on Mulama and when he returned to his jurisdiction, he declared that from that time forth, the wearing of shiboya and liboya by women was banned.

Women's dress

Chief Mulama then dispatched law enforcers to various markets like Butere, Sabatia, and on bridges to arrest any women seen wearing the shiboya and liboya. Other chiefs such as Petero Namakhabwa of Marama also followed suit. For example, at Sabatia market in Kakamega district, a huge fire was lit and Mulama stood by. Mulama's wife Otengo, sat in their car with a pair of scissors and a huge pile of fabrics called 'kanichi'. The law enforcers would cut off the women's shiboya and liboya and immediately throw them into the fire. Otengo would then pass them a piece of 'kanichi' fabric about three yards long and give instructions on how to tie it around their bodies (see Figure 28 on how the 'kanichi' was tied).

The women screamed and wailed and cried as they felt naked without their shiboya and liboya dress.

"Esie nesie wakhalakanga abandu amaboya eh...! "

loose translation,
"I was one of the law enforcers who cut off peoples' shiboya and liboya. Yes!..."
(Wanikete Luchiri pers comm Dec.1991).

As the women's shiboya and liboya were burnt, they cried:

"Eshindu shienderirwe shiunya - neshilulu - abaana banje nibafwe nibawe!"

loose translation,
"This thing [the new dress] smells bad - it's cursed - my children will all perish!"
(Jenifa Ocholi, pers comm. Dec 1991).

It was taboo for children to see the nakedness of their mother. Now that the mother's dress had been taken away, she was naked and her nakedness would bring a curse upon her children. The new 'dress' ('kanichi' fabric), was not considered to be an 'ingubo', the vernacular word for 'dress', and the women felt completely naked dressed in it.

According to informants, when the women got home after the ordeal of the market, they hid behind their fences and cried out for someone in the homestead to pass them their spare shiboya and liboya. Then, on entering the house, they had to be ritually cleansed. To do this, a sacrificial chicken was slaughtered (Okhupapasia ingokho). According to custom a naked woman was ritually unclean. To be without her shiboya and liboya, a woman was naked even though dressed in a 'kanichi'. This fact attests to the great importance attached to the indigenous form of dress. That

women had to hide behind their fences, implies that their self esteem was shattered. They had been publicly undressed and humiliated by the law enforcers, most of whom were men. The men, by cutting off their shiboya and liboya, had in essence raped the women since according to custom as indicated earlier, for a man to touch a woman's liboya was tantamount to rape. By appearing naked, the lives of their children were jeopardized since according to custom, a child was not supposed to see the mother naked lest he/she would die. The enormity of the sin of nakedness can be appreciated by the fact that before she entered her house thereby defiling it too, the woman had to be ritually cleansed by a sacrifice to the ancestor spirits.

Once, when the above episode was being narrated to me by an informant, her grandchildren were also listening. When she said that the women refused to acknowledge the 'kanichi' as a dress and would throw the 'kanichi' away upon reaching their homes, the grandchildren all exclaimed, 'but why?' To understand 'why' we would have to seek to know the worldview and mindset of individuals at that point in history and without our inherent biases and prejudices.

From that period (aprox. 1919) onwards, no woman was allowed into the market to buy or sell household goods unless she was dressed in a 'kanichi'. Some women therefore kept 'kanichis' to wear on market days and in public. In the privacy of their homes the shiboya and liboya continued

to be worn.

The culture appears to have attached greater importance to the liboya (back piece) more than the shiboya (front piece), because women continued to wear the liboya (back piece) under the other forms of dress for several years. One of the reasons was that if a woman did not have her liboya on, she could not enter her in-laws' home as she would still be considered naked despite being clad in other forms of dress.

'Kanichi' fabrics were available in the Indian merchants' shops by the late 1890's but were rarely purchased by the local people. In those days fabric was exchanged for a quantity of simsim (sesame) seeds which were in great demand by the Indian shopkeepers. At this time as women were without choice, they were forced to purchase the woven fabrics and wear them. 'Kanichi' appears to have been a name for both the fabric and dress style.

According to informants, in approximately 1922 a dress called 'mutunga' became available on the market (see Figure 29). The word 'mutunga' in Luyia translates to 'pole' or 'something straight'. It was also referred to as the "you just get in", dress. This dress was made by the local tailors. When one went into a shop, there were many 'mutunga' dresses hanging on display for prospective customers to try on. This dress was not popular in the Butere, Mumias, and Bunyore areas. In the Maragoli area,

close to Kakamega town the (b) version of Figure 29 was very popular. The 'mutunga' dress was also made of 'japan' fabric or 'marduff' fabric.

During this period, women would wear the 'maranda', a sisal skirt (see Figure 30) rather than the 'mutunga' dress for dances. The 'maranda' sisal skirt could sway and dip and flare according to a woman's dance movements unlike the 'mutunga' dress.

On the heels of the 'mutunga' dress followed another fashion called the 'shiteitei' dress. 'Shiteitei' was sleeveless, round necked, and had a fitted bodice with a gathered skirt and waistline seam (see Figure 31). This dress was worn on its own by younger women and adolescent girls. The married women tended to wear the 'shiteitei' like a petticoat inside another dress. The 'shiteitei' was made of japan fabric or 'marduff' fabric.

In approximately 1929 or 1930, a dress called 'machengo' was in fashion (see Figure 32). The 'machengo' was very popular and a number of women named their children after the dress. During the study, persons called Machengo were encountered, and they claimed to have been born between 1929 and 1931. The 'machengo' was mostly made from japan fabric which was white and fine. This dress had more gathers at the waist than the 'shiteitei'. The 'machengo' dress was washed with Reckits Blue. Reckits Blue, a product called 'blueing', is a chemical that becomes finely divided and

dispersed in water. It is bought in cubes and added to the final rinsing water. The fine blue particles clinging to the white fabric caused the white 'machengo' dress to look even whiter.

'Machengo' was worn with a gathered petticoat to make it flare out. Another version of 'machengo' known as 'machengo mapuli', had a dropped waistline and gathered skirt which joined the bodice at the hips (see Figure 32 b). It was the fashion when dressed in 'machengo' for women to stick a handkerchief into an armlet (see Figure 32 c). There was yet another version of the 'machengo' dress known as 'machengo my dear'. From informants' photographs, there appears to have been little or no design difference between 'machengo my dear' and 'machengo' except that 'machengo my dear' was bought for a woman by her husband.

In the 1930's at least 31,000 men from the district left their homes to seek employment in the gold mines and on European owned farms in order to pay their taxes (Wagner, 1970). The European settlers in Kenya called their wives 'my dear' which may have influenced the naming of the dress. My grand uncle once told me that 'my dear' was the English for 'omukhasi wanje' (i.e. wife). The 'machengo' dress was ankle length and was popular with younger women whose children were not yet in their teens.

The older women with teenage or older children preferred to wear a dress known as 'okwako ndara'. 'Okwako

ndara' are words in the Luo language. The Luo speaking people border the Baluyia to the South and these words translate loosely as 'to sweep the ground'. 'Okwako ndara' was made of a fabric called 'tamanini'. 'Tamanini' is said to have been similar to present day poplin, or light cotton.

'Okwako ndara' had a circular skirt. It was made up to be a bit longer than the person so that when the person walked the dress would drag along the path. People could always tell when a woman wearing 'okwako ndara' had passed by as imprints would be left on the path. Since on average, about 10 yards were required to make up one 'okwako ndara' dress (see Figure 33), one's economic state would influence the purchase of 'okwako ndara'. 'Okwako ndara' gained even more popularity towards 1939/40.

Although the 'kanichi' had been either dark blue or black, the common fabric color used for most dresses at this point was still basically white or off white. An important point to note is that people adopted the fashions at different times and occasionally one comes across a photograph in which a group of people are dressed in different fashions in the same instant.

From the data collected in this study, it appears that some time between 1919 and 1930, women accepted dress made of woven fabric and began to get excited by the different styles. On examining the historic dress forms in Britain, they did not look like those in the district. However, the

basic construction methods appear to have been inspired by British dress, for example, the types of necklines and skirts and collars.

Evidence from photographs shows that by the 1930's people did not wear as much ornamentation as during the earlier part of the century. The spread of mission stations could have had a role to play in this trend as the missionaries encouraged a Western culture and discouraged aspects of indigenous culture that included its forms of dress (Kuper, 1973).

The major expanding mission stations in the district included the Friends African Mission, the Church Mission Society, and the Mill Hill Mission. Between 1905 when the Friends African Mission was founded and 1922, it had 31,000 adherents. The Church Mission Society had 5,000 adherents between 1906-1927, and the Mill Hill Mission had 12,600 adherents between 1905 and 1931 (Wagner, 1970).

Among the Islamic/Mohammedan community of the district, the women did not necessarily dress in the styles that have been described. When questioned, all the informants agreed that staunch Moslems dressed differently. For example one informant had this to say, "When my mother became a Moslem, she began to wear the two lessos like the other Moslem women" (see Figure 34) (K. Ramadhan pers. comm. Dec. 1991).

According to Hanby and Bygott (1985), Lessos or kangas originated from the East African coast in the mid-nineteenth

century. The early designs probably had a border and a pattern of white spots on a dark background. Early this century, Swahili proverbs, aphorisms, or slogans were added to lessos or kangas.

Men's dress

During the same period after his return from Buganda, Chief Mulama also declared that from then on, all his 'abakatikiro' (Luyianized term referring to Chief's advisors, all of whom were male) were to dress in the 'kanzu'. The 'kanzu' was a long shirt-like dress and is worn by the gentleman on the right in Figure 26.

Early photographs of Chiefs show them dressed in a 'lichoo' which was a dark colored and embroidered outer robe with a light colored 'kanzu' inside. According to information from informants, the 'kanzu' was white or cream. By 1919, some dignitaries still dressed in a manner similar to that of leaders and dignitaries in figure 35.

The 'kikoi', a handwoven fabric from the Kenya coast, was sometimes worn inside the 'kanzu'. The 'kikoi' is a striped fabric with tassels at both ends (see Figure 36). Although the 'kikoi' was popular among Islamic men, it was not confined to them alone.

During 1919 and in the early 1920's, men also tied the 'shuka' (see Figure 37). The 'shuka' was popularized by Chief Mulama's declaration that people cover up more of

their bodies. British administration had also, at this point, begun to discourage males in indigenous dress forms from walking in towns or entering government offices. The 'shuka' was made of fabric named 'marduff' or 'japan'. The 'marduff' fabric was coarse and off-white in color, while japan was fine and very white in color. Fabrics were measured in 'hands' (see Figure 38).

The older men draped blankets over their bodies in the same style as a 'shuka' would be draped. Red blankets were known as 'shiboko', and the heavier woolly ones made of sheep's wool were known as 'khodoro'. The blankets were so hardy that they could last eight years without showing signs of wear and tear.

By 1916, the Singer Sewing Machine Company began to import sewing machines into the district (Wagner, 1970). Prior to that, Missionaries, Arabs, and Indians living in the district arrived with sewing machines from Mombasa which they used to sew their own garments. Local men soon began to apprentice as tailors. Ogot (1971) mentions a prominent local tailor called Michael Akoth who made uniforms for Musanda church (see Map 3) in 1919. Margery Perham (1976), writes of seeing indigenous male African tailors with thriving businesses during her 1929/30 visit to the district. Female tailors in Kakamega district are a more recent phenomenon. They appear after independence in 1963. The tailors were available at the major trading centers in

the district.

One tailor whose name was Ajuoga had this to say:

> When I left my village at Lukongo Eshikhupa Mulai, I went to Nakuru and Gilgil and Molo where I apprenticed to Indian tailors [see Map 2]. Eventually, I came to Butere where I was apprenticed to Elisha Akunda and we sewed together. Elisha had been in turn apprenticed to Indian tailors in Kisii and he could make men's suits very well. The types of sewing machines that were in use were called Singer, Pffaf, Phoenix, Usha and Safari. The machines sounded as loud as tractors and did not move at as fast a speed as machines do today.
> (John Ajuoga, pers. comm. Dec. 1991)

In the early 1920's when women dressed in 'shiteitei' and 'mutunga', men wore the 'langi' or trouser and 'ketera' top. The 'langi' was a long trouser with a pull cord at the waist. The 'ketera' was a sleeveless vest-like garment with a neck line that allowed the head to slide through without the use of a slit opening. Both the 'ketera' and 'langi' were made of 'marduff' fabric and were sewn by local tailors at the market (see Figure 39).

At the same time the wearing of 'kanzu' and 'iloti' (see Figure 40) was popular, especially among the Moslems. The 'kanzu' was bought ready-made and the 'iloti' was made to fit by local tailors. Although this dress combination was popular among the Islamic men, it was by no means exclusive to them. In the latter half of the 1920's sleeveless shirts with small collars and two front buttons were also worn. These were worn over 'iloti' or 'langi'.

The British administrators continued to supply local guards with uniforms which included khaki shorts, shirts and

trousers. In those early years (1920), men who were not in the employ of the British did not necessarily dress in shorts. In the 1930's when women were wearing 'machengo' and 'okwako ndara', younger men were wearing short shorts. In the 1930's the fashion was to have the shorts as flared as possible. If they were not flared enough the tailor would be stuck with them as the customer could reject them (see Figure 41).

The older men at this time wore longer shorts and held them up with strings that they wove at home from sisal/papyrus reed in the technique of the strings of shiboya and liboya (see Figure 42). The shorts were made of 'marduff' fabric.

Children's dress

Babies and young children (below the school-going age) in the period of Mulama's declaration were dressed much like they had been in the period referred to as 'long ago'. No evidence suggesting that children had changed their mode of dress by the early 1920's was found. In later years however, the older girls who had reached puberty would dress in a 'shiteitei' (see Figure 31). Boys wore loin cloths made increasingly from 'marduff' fabric and less from hide and leather. The boys also draped a cotton fabric over their bodies. Figure 43 was drawn from a microfilm photograph depicting chief Mulama bringing potential pupils

to Butere Vocational School. Photographs on the same page are dated 1922-24 (Ashford, 1900-1924).

Religion and dress.

At this time the more affluent Christian men dressed in British style suits like the gentleman on the left in figure 26. Affluent men of Islamic religion dressed up in the 'kanzu' and flowing robes or coat as in figure 35. The 'Dini ya Roho', an independent church movement which gained support in the 1920's, was formed as a reaction against some of the practices advocated by the Christian religion. In 1935, its members refused to wear European forms of dress. Instead they dressed like the ancient Hebrews (Middleton, 1963; Osogo, 1966; Ogot, 1971).

Another independent religious group known as Mumbo was formed in 1921, and forbade the wearing of European forms of dress. The Mumbo members wore indigenous forms of dress, i.e. 'lisero' and shiboya and liboya and accessories, and its male members did not cut their hair. The Mumbo religious movement died down after the leaders were deported from the area to the distant Kenya coast by the British administration. In 1935, Elijah Masinde of the independent church movement 'Dini ya musambwa' prophesied that the perfect traditional way of life would one day be revived. The adherents of this movement also rejected the new European forms of dress (Middleton, 1963; Osogo, 1966).

Wedding dress

In Kakamega district, as Christian mission stations proliferated, the number of converts increased. The missionaries advocated white weddings. Before the 1920's white weddings were rare. None of the informants mentioned them before 1920, but there was evidence that they were happening even as far back as before 1914 (Salome Nafula, pers comm. 1991). A white wedding here is defined as when a bride wears a white dress and white veil for the wedding ceremony. White weddings were common after the 1930's.

Conclusion

Chief Mulama was a major influence on fashion when he made the declaration on dress. The people, including his brother Nabongo Mumia, believed that he was bringing a curse onto the land. The Nabongo Mumia was very conservative and the women in his household continued to dress in the shiboya and liboya as they were above Mulama's sumptuary laws. A photograph taken in the 1930's still had them dressed in the shiboya and liboya (private collection-Nabongo's family, Mumias). When no calamity occurred in the land after Mulama's declaration, people settled down to the woven fabrics and as one of the informants declared,
"We men respected Chief Mulama because we were no longer fearful of our mother-in-law as our dress now covered the whole body".

The above statement was made by an informant who felt relieved by no longer having to wear the 'lisero' male dress. The 'lisero' covered half the man's body and had to be turned continuously so that a mother-in-law or aunt did not see the man's exposed body. As for the women, though originally disgusted, as years went by, the younger generation became excited about new dress fashions. Some members of the older generation continued to wear the 'liboya' under their other dress forms for many years after. Fashions came and went with seemingly increasing rapidity.

This is the period when breakaway churches were formed and advocated a going back to indigenous dress forms. However, by the end of this period, the majority of the people had changed from wearing indigenous dress forms.

SECTION 3

5.4 Fashion, suicide and song.

From the late 1930's up to the fifties, new fashions appeared at an increasing pace in the district. Some of the songs that were composed about various dress styles have been included in this section. In Africa, music is sometimes used as an avenue of expressing individual or group sentiments (Nketia, 1974). Apart from songs composed for the various stages of the life cycle, politics, social events, and so forth, songs are also used as a means of social control. People speak in songs as they would not speak in ordinary discourse, and songs of advice to erring members of the community are common (Merriam, 1982).

During this period, it was reported that some persons committed dress-related suicide. Suicide is an index of social disorganization or lack of integration. During this period, the country of Kenya was going through political as well as social upheaval as people tried to understand themselves. This was the period when indigenous Kenyans were caught between the pull of Indigenous culture and the pull of Western culture which was being introduced by missionaries, colonial administrators and European settlers. It was not possible to ascertain whether the suicide was actually wholly dress-related, or whether the lack of the dress simply fuelled an already out-of-control situation.

According to Bohannan, (1960), killing oneself to avenge oneself on others was a form of suicide found among the Baluyia between 1940 and 1960. An unhappy marriage was the reason found to account for about 80% of female suicides in Bohannan's sample during that period (Wagner, 1970; Bohannan, 1960).

For this period, dress styles will be examined in their socio-cultural context, and discussed according to gender, age, and occasion, where the data allows. Dress will be discussed under the divisions of women, men and children

Women's dress

Around 1936, the 'marinda' dress was popular in the district. The 'marinda' dress had a six-gore (six pieces) skirt which was flared out, and a round collar, a 'tennis' collar, or 'v' neckline (see Figure 44). The 'marinda' had short sleeves and usually had buttons down the front. The 'marinda' was so popular that songs were composed about it. One version of a song commonly sung during dances and parties went like this:

Isiche yalia amabere, Atai
isiche Mamboleo, isiche yalia amabere,
Atai songa mbele.
Isiche yalia amabere, Atai
isiche Mamboleo, isiche yalia amabere,
Atai songa mbele.
Atai lala chini- maduong- lala chini
maduong marinda
Atai lala chini- maduong - songa mbele
maduong marinda...

Loose translation of the song:

> The locusts ate the sorghum, Atai
> the locusts at Mamboleo ate the sorghum,
> Atai move foreward.
> The locusts ate the sorghum, Atai
> The locusts at Mamboleo ate the sorghum,
> Atai move forward.
> Atai stoop down- a very wide- stoop down
> a very wide marinda
> Atai stoop down- a very wide- move forward
> a very wide marinda...

In the above song, 'Atai' is the name of a young woman in the village and 'Mamboleo' is one of the trading centers in the district. The young women had the opportunity to show off their 'marinda' dresses due to the dance movements that were recommended by the song.

The meaning of this song is best captured against the socio-economic context in the district during the mid-1930's. In 1936, there was a plague of locusts in Kakamega and environs which ate up all the sorghum. This led to scarcity of food among the people. Although this song was sung during social occasions and includes lively dance movements for showing off the 'marinda' dress, the deeper feeling of anxiety is brought out in the words about the locusts eating the sorghum.

The song about the 'marinda' is sung in three combined languages. For example,

'isiche yalia amabere'- Luyia language

'songa mbele'- Swahili language

'maduong marinda'- Luo language

All three communities were affected by the havoc wrought by

the locusts. The song helped confirm the period when this dress was in fashion, and also confirmed the closeness and intermingling of three of the cultures in the district as they traded with each other and occasionally intermarried.

During the mid to late 1930's, the 'korea' dress became popular. The 'korea' had side gathers, a 'kona tatu' (three point) neckline (see Figure 45 a), or a saw neckline, that is, with a zigzag shape (see Figure 45 b).

Between 1935 and 1945, a dress called 'indege' was in fashion. 'Indege' translates as 'aeroplane', and was worn during the Second World War when aeroplanes flying overhead were a common sight. The Second World War was commonly known as the war of 'Keya' (Kenya African Rifles), and some children born during this period are called Keya. Thousands of Indigenous Kenyans fought or participated in this war on the British side (Moyse-Bartlett, 1956).

The 'indege' dress had a four gore skirt and a square neckline (see Figure 46). Towards the end of World War 2, the 'indege' dress had a circular skirt as opposed to the four gore skirt of the earlier version, and was called 'ndege round'. About five yards of fabric were required for the skirt part of the 'ndege round' (see Figure 47).

Prior to the 1940's, the common fabric that was used for dress was white or off white. However, from the mid 1940's, a fabric called 'makunguru' became available on the local market. 'Makunguru' had black and white stripes (see

Figure 48). 'Makunguru' fabric was not popular among women as they felt it was more suitable for children (see children's dress in this section).

In 1941, green and blue cotton fabrics appeared in the markets. These fabrics were manufactured in Jinja, Uganda. The green fabric (majani kabichi), was so popular that it became known as 'mother-in-law's agony' by some. A daughter-in-law was expected to assist her mother in law, but could become extremely uncooperative until her husband purchased the green dress. This green dress was also known as 'kurin'. The styles were like the ones discussed prior to this. It is the fabric color which was important in this instance.

In the early 1950's, nylon fabric became available in the markets. The nylon dress was made in any of the styles described earlier. However, it had to be worn with a very heavy petticoat as the wind kept blowing it up and embarrassing the wearer. The nylon dress also took very little time to dry in the tropical sun, as little as it would take a woman to have a bath. Thus it was an ideal dress fabric if one did not possess many dresses. Many of the women became quite fed up with the nylon dresses as they were reputed to last ten years without tearing. They were soon labeled 'the dress of the poor'.

From 1950 to 1952, a dress known as 'koka kola' was in fashion. The 'koka kola' was made from fabric which had red

and white, or blue and white prints. 'Koka kola' appears to have been the name for the style as well as the fabric. 'Koka kola' translates as 'coca cola'. To most people in Kakamega at the time, coca cola was not among the common soft drinks. However, it is important to note that coca cola had made a recent appearance on the market. At that time, aerated drinks similar to today's 'vimto' and 'pepto', which were locally manufactured by traders, were most common. The 'koka kola' fabric had a border and the dress was always made up in the same way. That is, the border of the fabric always made up the bottom of the skirt (see Figure 49).

By the 1950's Christianity was widespread in the district, and the Christmas season was of great importance. During the Christmas season of approximately 1950-52, it was the fashion among women to wear the 'koka kola' dress. Some of the women who did not own the 'koka kola' dress committed suicide, and others divorced their husbands in protest. As mentioned earlier, suicide among women was mainly a result of unhappy marriages (Bohannan, 1960). The significance and importance of this dress therefore was that it was used as a confirmation of the love a husband felt for his wife.

During this period women, unlike the men, did not have much access to personal income with which to purchase the dresses themselves. The informants from the central part of the district (about 30% of the total number), each knew of

someone who had done something drastic because she did not have the 'koka kola' dress to wear during the season.

Songs were composed about the 'koka kola' dress. One version went like this:

> Koka kola, Koka kola,
> Baumananga butwsa ingubo ya ko-kola
> Angulu wukhaire," nolamba ko-kola
> ndakhekhola omulimo"...

Loose translation. Angulu is the name of a young woman.

> koka kola, koka kola
> The ko-kola dress
> Angulu says, "if you don't get me the ko-kola dress,
> I will be a 'burden '[do something drastic]"...

By using the particular Luyia words, 'ndakhekhola omulimo', which have ominous connotations, Angulu was implying that by being a burden, she would do "something drastic" like suicide. In the indigenous Baluyia concept of death (see Chapter 4, p. 59), the deceased was resentful of the surviving relatives and could wield power over the living. Thus Angulu could have threatened her husband that if he did not buy her the 'koka kola' dress, she could commit suicide, and hope that her spirit would trouble her husband who had forced her into the impossible situation. Although in life he wielded power over her, and provided or failed to provide as he pleased, in death, she would have power over him and he would spend the rest of his days appeasing her.

The particular Angulu who was mentioned in this song eventually divorced her husband when he did not buy her the

'koka kola' dress. Even though she was not among those who committed suicide, the divorce was quite a shock to the local community and so songs were composed about her.

More study is needed in this area to try to determine the use of dress as an expression of relationships. Why did the women choose to use dress as an excuse for suicide when on closer examination, the reason appears to have been the stressful relationship between them and their spouses or the community?

In the 1950's, wearing of ornaments had greatly declined as compared to 'long ago'. It was now common among women to wear only one string of beads around the neck and possibly an armlet with a handkerchief stuck into it, or one or two bracelets. Headgear for women consisted of a cotton head scarf tied back with the knot over one ear (see Figure 50).

Men's dress

In 1940/41, the 'kasmiri' suit and the 'katana' suit were being worn by men. The 'kasmiri' suit was made of black fabric. The 'katana' suit was made of white fabric, had turned up trousers and reached the height of its popularity by the early 1950's (see Figure 51). A 'suit' can be defined as any set of clothes of the same or similar material designed to be worn together; in the case of the 'kasmiri' and 'katana' it was a coat and matching trousers.

The men who dressed in the above-mentioned clothes were usually teachers or those employed in the government offices. In the 1940's, elderly men could still be seen wearing the 'lisero' (men's dress of 'long ago' made from calf leather), and a blanket draped over one shoulder (see Figure 52).

Apart from the above, khaki shorts and shirts were still worn. Khaki shorts in the 1940's were called 'flat'. The shorts did not have a waistband but they had buttons (see Figure 53). The khaki used at this time was called 'americani' and was probably imported from America. According to Otto Marcus, who founded the Old East Africa Trading Company in the early 19th century, 'americani' was unbleached grey cotton (Marcus, 1904).

The men of Moslem faith in the district continued to dress in the 'kanzu' and turban, and 'kikoi'. In the early 1940's the kikoi was not readily available in local shops and, in case of a Moslem wedding in the district where it was mandatory to wear one, a relative would be dispatched in advance of the wedding to go in search of one.

During the 1950's, 'flat' shorts were less common and another style with side pockets had gained popularity (see Figure 54). At this time, the more important a man's status, the wider his trousers. The Chief's trousers were therefore very wide, not to mention those of the local District Officer who was above him in status. The dress

showed that according to the status categories, the chief was no longer at the top.

Children's dress

During the period from the late 1930's to the early 1940's, 'makunguru' fabric was on the market. 'Makunguru' had black and white stripes (see Figure 48). This fabric which had been rejected by the women, was used for making children's dress because it did not stain easily. During the 1940's, the children's dress looked like simpler versions of adult dress. Babies were also dressed up in dress from woven fabrics unlike in the 'long ago' period (see Figure 16).

School enrollment was rising as the benefits of literacy were experienced (Kiwanuka, 1982), and uniforms were worn in the schools. For example, in Maseno sector school, boys wore a pair of khaki shorts and shirts which had a badge with the emblem of the school on it (see Figure 55). The uniforms were starched and the starch cost five cents a packet which was considered expensive at the time.

The younger girls (less than 12 years) wore simple styles to school such as 'shiteitei' (see Figure 31). The older girls wore school uniforms. For example, one girl's school in Musanda had a white uniform with a badge and a white headscarf with a red stripe running across it (see Figure 56). To wear a school uniform became a status symbol

among the youth and to go to school became almost a fashion. Each school had a different badge and stripes, and for one school to copy the uniform of another was an unspoken taboo.

When the pupils came home for the holidays from the boarding schools, they were all dressed up in their uniforms. The school authorities hoped that the way in which they were dressed would encourage other children to want to join the schools. The girls who did not go to school dressed in a 'shiteitei' and boys who did not go to school wore shorts and shirts with no badge (I. Mudenyo, pers. comm. Dec. 1991).

Conclusion.

In this section, dress from the late nineteen thirties and early nineteen fifties was discussed. Songs were composed about dress such as the 'marinda' which brought out aspects of the socio-economic context. During this period, colors became more important than the styles. For example, the green dresses were rated high among women. Fabrics which implied a lower economic status were not popular. At this time, the concept of 'unclad' was extended to children and they were covered up with dress.

SECTION 4

5.5 Towards independence.

The nineteen fifties was the decade prior to independence and the period when African political organizations became more conspicuous than before. This was the period of massive political awakening throughout Africa. and it is during this decade that real political progress towards self-determination was made (Nabudere, 1982). During this decade, land alienation by the colonial administration was felt the most in the African reserves. The reserves were crowded and could not sustain their populations. Men were forced to seek a living elsewhere in order to care for their families and therefore migrated to towns and European plantations to seek employment (Kiwanuka, 1982).

In 1952, King George the sixth died while his daughter Elizabeth was on a visit to Kenya. Her visit was related to Kenya's impending independence. Princess Elizabeth, however, had to immediately leave for England to be crowned Queen Elizabeth II. In the same year (1952), W.W.W. Awori from Western Kenya joined the legislative council and in Nairobi, the Baluyia association was formed in 1954 with Musa Amalemba as the first president (Ogot, 1981). There must have been a sizeable number of Baluyia living in Nairobi by 1954 to warrant an association.

Nairobi, Kenya's capital was the hot-bed of politics although the excitement was felt in the rural areas as well. Thus it is possible that migrations could have influenced dress styles in the district as people visited back and forth from the country's major cities and rural areas. Political mobilization during this period, more than ever before, brought all Kenyan communities together (Amin & Eames, 1988; Bennet, 1965; Italiaander, 1961; Nabudere, 1981, 1982; Ogot,1980; Osogo, 1965, 1966; Rinehart, 1983; Singh, 1969; Were and Wilson, 1977). On 12 December 1963, Kenya attained her independence.

Dress in this section will be discussed under the divisions of women, men, children, weddings, and politicians as the data allow.

Women's dress.

In 1953, about a year after Princess Elizabeth had visited Kenya, a fabric was sold in the markets called 'queen'. This fabric had prints of the head and crown of a caucasian queen. The queen featured here was most likely Elizabeth the Second. Elizabeth II ascended the throne after the death of her father George VI. Kenya was a British colony then and therefore it is hardly surprising that fabrics commemorating the queen's ascension would be sold in local markets.

Out of the 'queen' fabric one of the popular dress

styles made according to the female informants was 'queen mshika tumbo' which translates loosely as 'queen, it holds the waist'. This dress was calf length and had an elasticized waist (see Figure 57). The women felt that to really look good in the 'queen' dress one had to have a small waist. The fashionable body shape of the 1950's was thus different from the fashionable body shape of the 1890's when to be rounded and full figured was a sign of great beauty.

During the same time, as the 'queen', lace fabric was also available on the market. The lace fabric was called 'las makonge' and was colored blue, pink and white. When one informant was asked whether there was red colored lace, since red is quite a popular color today, she answered, "Red? Nobody wore red! Red attracts lightning and was only used as a decorative stripe down women's underwear. Nobody wore red fabric then."

The women's underwear during this period was made up of a pair of knickers with an attached skirt. Both had pockets so that the women could keep their money safely when going to shop (see Figure 58). The above was considered one item of dress. If one so desired, a separate full-length petticoat was worn over the underwear.

During this time, the 'madirisha' dress was also in fashion. 'Madirisha' translates loosely as 'windows'. This dress had six box pleats. Three in front and three in the

back (see Figure 59). When the woman walked, the pleats would open up.

By the 1950's the houses commonly built had windows for ventilation rather than the ventilation space that ran above the wall in earlier designs. For most people during those years, the windows had wooden shutters. Teachers, preachers and chiefs were the ones who liked to build houses with glass windows. The open and closed wooden shutters resembled pleats (see Figure 60). It is possible that this could have been the reason why pleats were referred to as 'windows' and the dress as the 'madirisha' or 'windows'.

The 1950's was also a period when skirts were worn in large numbers. Skirts were called 'nusu nguo' which translated as 'half a dress'. Skirts were gathered, pleated or circular.

From 1955-57 the 'tight' dress was in fashion. The 'tight' dress was only worn by unmarried young women. One informant said:

> My father hated the 'tight'. He said, "Anyone in a 'tight' should not step in my home...". So I used to hide the 'tight' in the basket when I was going to market and change into it along the way behind a thicket of trees...

However, even in the market, it appears that a woman was not safe. A different informant mentioned that if a policeman saw a woman in a 'tight' in the market, she would be forced to wear a sack (gunny bag) over it or else go home without getting her shopping done.

The 'tight' dress had a zip in the back and it was so tight that one simply hobbled along in it. There was no slit in the skirt to make walking easier (see Figure 61). A song was composed about the 'tight' dress and a version of it went like this:

Nakhumita eeh, Mukhasi Nakhumita
walola omundu nafwalire itaiti naba linani
Nakhumita eeh, Nakhumita
Wanyola omundu nafwalire itaiti naba kunani...

Loose translation: (Nakhumita is a female name).

Nakhumita yes, the woman Nakhumita
If you see a person dressed in a tight, it is a 'beast'
Nakhumita yes, Nakhumita
If you meet a person dressed in a tight, it is a real 'beast'...

The above song was composed by young men. The 'linani' or 'beast' (sometimes 'ogre') is a Baluyia mythical creature. The mythical creature frequently occurs in Baluyia folklore. It had the capacity to turn into the most handsome and charming man. It thus convinced victims of its good intentions and was welcomed into homes and given a lovely daughter by the family as a bride. However, at night it would turn back into the 'beast' and eat up its unsuspecting victims. According to the above song, a woman dressed in a 'tight' was supposedly a 'beast' in the guise of a woman and thus men were warning each other to beware of her in the song.

The 'tight' was probably a controversial dress judging by the various reactions to the wearer by parents, police,

and local young men. It is apparent, however, that the strongest reactions against the dress were from the male members of the community. The reactions against dress styles which revealed the female body shape continued into the 1960's in Kenya as a whole (Whipper, 1972).

Men's dress

In the early 1950's, men wore shirts with collars that folded back known as shirt collars (see Figure 62). Prior to the 1950's, shirts such as the above were available to very few people who were affluent or were very fashionable. But by the 1950's, the local tailors had learned how to sew them and they were more readily available. An interesting point is that today all male shirts are available in a ready made form. The few times when tailors make shirts is when they are part of a uniform, or if the client is of unusual size and cannot get a good fit in ready-mades.

During the same period, tailored shorts had waistbands and crosspockets or inside pockets (see Figure 63). The terms 'crosspockets ' and 'inside pockets' were from a local tailor. Photographs collected depict a few men dressed in woolen trousers, narrower than 'katana' trousers and long-sleeved shirts (see figure 62).

The male school teachers in North Nyanza, the name of the area which the district was a part of, wore uniforms during the course of their duties. The teacher uniforms

consisted of a light blue shirt, khaki shorts, knee length socks and leather shoes. Western forms of dress were considered to be indicative of 'progressiveness' by a growing number of people (Clarfield, 1987; E.A.I.S.C.A., 1966).

During the later part of the 1950's men wore British style suits made of coats, matching trousers and worn with ties and long-sleeved shirts. Early in the 1920's Chief Mulama had dressed like this but his style had been rare in his day. By the 1950's it was the common form of dress. Informants mentioned blue serge coats and bow ties, and patent leather shoes. The Bata shoe company set up a factory in 1956 to make leather shoes locally in Kenya. The leather shoes prior to 1950 were very hard, heavy and uncomfortable. The 1950's was also the decade when people moved even more frequently between the rural and urban areas, and therefore, dress at this point could have been purchased from the large cities and towns.

Children's dress

During the decade of the fifties, girls wore dresses regardless of age unlike in the long ago period, the twenties, and the thirties. Children's clothes cost eight cents on the local markets in 1953. Girls' dresses were simple and had round necks and gathered skirts, and boys dress consisted of shorts and shirts usually made of khaki

fabric.

By the 1950's the shiboya and liboya had almost vanished as daily dress among the women. However, they appeared in another context. The shiboya and liboya had now become ritual dress. Now instead of being worn by married women, they were worn by unmarried adolescent girls after puberty.

Baluyia males undergo initiation as a right of passage. In the majority of the Baluyia sub-groups, initiation of males takes the form of circumcision. During the circumcision ceremony there is a period when the initiates live in seclusion. During this time, their adolescent sisters or cousins are assigned to take them food. The girls who took food to initiates were called 'machengeche', and would dress up in shiboya and liboya. The liboya and shiboya would be worn only for the process of delivering food to the initiates especially in the ares of Mumias, Marama, Butere, and Butstotso in the district.

The boys in seclusion wore long masks, for example in Tiriki. After seclusion in some parts of the district, all their utensils and dress would be burned together in the seclusion hut. For a detailed and very comprehensive coverage of circumcision dress among the Baluyia, see Burt (1980), and Wagner (1970).

Wedding dress.

During this period, the number of Christians and Moslems had risen and they dressed in the following way for weddings.

The Christian wedding party consisted of the following persons: the bride, 2 bridesmaids and one youth on the bride's side, and the groom and his friends on the other. In the 1950's wedding dresses were white and long. The bride had three veils all at once with black patent leather shoes. The well-to-do wore lace veils and the ones who could not afford lace wore 'tamanini' fabric veils and dresses. 'Tamanini' was a white light-textured cotton fabric. The other girls in the party were also dressed in white dresses. During the 1950's it was preferred that the groom wear long trousers and a coat. It was the responsibility of the groom to dress the bride and her bridesmaids. A wedding could be a non-starter just because a bride and her bridesmaids had not been provided with their dresses.

The tailors sewed wedding dresses for free as long as one purchased fabric from their particular shops. The tailors who were well known in the district for their wedding dresses included, Noor Mohammed, Andati Chitayi, Amakulu Owaka, John Ajuoga, and Kanji. According to informants, in the 1950's John Ajuoga and Kanji were considered to be the best tailors in the whole district.

In the Baluyia Moslem community, the bride wore a long new dress with a long petticoat underneath (mandatory). Over all that she wore a 'buibui' which is a dark-colored gown consisting of a veil, and which Islamic women wore on top of all their dresses when they were going out.

The groom wore a white 'kanzu' (see Figure 40), a white turban and underneath the 'kanzu, a mandatory kikoi (see Figure 36). By the 1950's the kikoi was readily available in local shops unlike in the 1940's when a relation would be dispatched in advance of the wedding to purchase one.

Politicians' dress

Political activity during the fifties accelerated and led to independence in 1963. The decade of the 1950's was one in which there was a spirit of nationalism. Nationalism is a response to people's disillusionment over the ways and values imposed on them from outside. They began to turn inward to themselves, and successful nationalism meant identifying a way of life as their own. Symbols of nationalism that reappear in Africa and other developing countries include dress, language, folklore and religion (Bean, 1989; Cohn, 1989; Foster, 1973). This was evident on the political scene in Kenya.

In the 1950's politicians of the day adopted the dress styles of their ancestors from the period 1880 to about 1910. Although in this study, it is dress in Kakamega

district that is under discussion, by the late 1950's almost the whole country had adopted European forms of dress. The new members of parliament therefore wore their indigenous dress to parliament as a protest against political domination. The Baluyia members dressed in fur capes like the elders in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Maasai politicians wore tall headdresses and togas (see Saitoti Ole, 1980, 1986 for Maasai dress), the Luo, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, etc. all wore their indigenous dress (see Adamson (1965), who has an excellent account on the dress of the peoples of Kenya).

After independence, though, the members debated in Parliament about their dress and agreed to put them aside and dress as they were now used to, that is, in European forms of dress. The values of the people regarding dress had changed and now it seemed as though the people felt more comfortable in the new Western forms of dress. One indigenous Kenyan in the new Post Independence Cabinet had this to say in his opening speech during a cultural heritage seminar of the East African Institute of Social and Cultural affairs (E.A.I.S.C.A.):

> Some of us, particularly those who had acquired a European type of Education, set ourselves out to prove to our colonial rulers that we had...abandoned everything connected with our past...
> (E.A.I.S.C.A., 1966, p. 7).

One of the aims of the E.A.I.S.C.A. which was created by the newly independent states had been to try and revive aspects

of East African culture that had been abandoned by the indigenous people. However, by this time, a form of 'cultural authentication' had taken place in dress. Cultural authentication is a concept developed by Eicher and Erekosima (1980), to explain the process by which a culture can turn an unfamiliar idea or object (such as different forms of dress), into a familiar valued one (Kaiser, 1990).

Conclusion

In this decade that led to independence in 1963, dress continued to change as socio-cultural factors impacted on it. During this decade, there was a growing antagonism towards Indigenous dress forms. Some of the people felt that Western dress forms were indicative of 'progressiveness' and those who did not adopt them were evaluated as 'backward'. The fashionable female body shape appeared to be changing. Whereas in the late nineteenth century, to have a rounded belly was desirable, in 1953, women felt that to look becoming in a dress like the 'queen mshika tumbo', one needed to have a small belly. The spirit of nationalism was manifest in dress as politicians returned to more indigenous dress forms as a protest against colonial administration.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This study has documented the changing dress forms worn in Kakamega district from the late nineteenth century to independence in 1963. The study has also attempted to show the extent to which socio-cultural factors have impacted on dress over a period of time. Some of the socio-cultural factors which impacted on dress worn include socio-economic status, occupation, values, customs, beliefs, religious and political affinities as well as trade. Among the Baluyia of Kakamega district, the evidence shows that over the years the changing values of the people were manifest in the forms of dress they wore.

Dress and social stratification

Among the Baluyia of Kakamega, especially in the period referred to as 'long ago', which dates approximately 1883-1918, the society's stratification was apparent in dress. The manner in which the people dressed in the district reflected their status in terms of age, gender, and occupation (Workman, 1990). According to Kaiser (1985), functional theories of stratification by Davies and Moore in 1945, argued that hierarchies provide a contribution to social order. Davies and Moore stated that some positions are more vital to society than others and therefore

individuals holding these positions should receive greater privilege. Among the Baluyia, those in high positions such as the Nabongo (King) and elders appear to have received greater privileges vis-a-vis the rest of society as regards the kind of dress which they wore.

The Nabongo wore a special copper bracelet which symbolized leadership and which was never taken off until his death. If a member of the society managed to get ahold of the bracelet and wear it, he could declare himself ruler. Thus the bracelet was heavily guarded (Osogo, 1966). Among the Zulu people of South Africa, who like the Baluyia are Bantu speakers, dress was also an important means of distinguishing elite members of society in the eighteenth century. Status and rank among the Zulu were exemplified by the wearing of brass ornaments (Kennedy, 1982).

According to photographic data collected during the study, the Nabongo wore more sumptuous dress than other members of society. His skin cloak was of richer fur and his cape covered much of his body and appeared voluminous. Probably the best furs were reserved for him as similar fur capes worn by elders do not appear to be as voluminous as those of the Nabongo (king). Wagner (1970) states that if an ordinary Baluyia individual killed a leopard, he/she would give the skin to an elder to wear as a cloak. The leopard skin cloak was a status symbol that signified eldership and leadership. Initiation among the Baluyia

males took the form of circumcision or the removal of four lower teeth (Burt, 1980). The higher status attained by age and initiation was manifest in dress since an uninitiated male could never wear the dress of the initiated (Roscoe, 1909). In Tiriki area of Kakamega district, the elderly women wore skin cloaks due to their advanced position in the society.

The phenomenon of the dress worn reflecting age, sex, and position in the society occurs in various other societies in Africa. Hilda Kuper (1968, 1973) found it to be the case among the Swazi people of Swaziland in Southern Africa. Among the Samburu, Cole (1979) also found that body ornamentation was at a minimum during infancy, of highest weight and intensity during the prime of life, and reducing in the middle and later years. Among the Baluyia during the period referred to as 'long ago', body painting and ornamentation increased with age up to a certain point and then tapered off in the later years. During dances, females approaching marriageable age in Kakamega could have their breasts painted in various colored clays whilst elders, both male and female were not allowed by custom to decorate their bodies like the younger men and women (Burt, 1982).

Cole (1979) also found that the Samburu people of Kenya dressed differently according to status characteristics such as age and gender. Even though the materials that made up the men's and women's ornaments were similar among the

Samburu, both the uses and styles were gender specific. Among the Nuba of Sudan, Faris (1972) found that although the materials used for manufacturing dress were similar for both men and women, the styles were distinct. In Kakamega district, the type of dress worn by individuals was also gender specific. During some occasions however, there is evidence that it was possible for a person to wear the dress of the opposite sex. For example, in the 1930's, after the death of a spouse, the surviving spouse would wear the dress of the deceased during the mourning period. In the event of the husband's death, as a sign of her faithfulness to him, the wife or wives would wear his dress during the period of mourning (Wagner, 1970).

Sometimes dress was restricted to a specific occasion. The dress which was used for occasions of initiation was not used for other occasions and in most cases was burnt after the seclusion period that followed initiation (I. Mudenyo, J. Ocholi, J. Shikwati, pers. comm. Nov./Dec. 1991).

The results of this study also show that during the later years after people changed to 'Western' forms of dress, the obvious distinction between dressing according to age decreased. By the 1940's children as well as adults covered their bodies with dress. A child from an affluent family could wear more sumptuous dress than an initiated male who was not so affluent unlike in the past when dress codes were more strict. This, however, did not mean that

the society was becoming less stratified, but indicated the emergence of new social categories in which stratification was expressed.

Morality and dress and meanings of dress.

Among the Baluyia, dress also served to express certain values held by the society. According to anthropological symbolic theory, dress can serve as a metaphor of the individual's relationship to the cultural system and serve in expressing subtle values in human culture (J.A. Hamilton and J.W. Hamilton, 1989). The first explorers and missionaries began to arrive in Kenya during the Victorian era. The Victorian era was known for its modest attitudes towards the body which were manifest in the British dress of the day. According to Victorian values at the time, covering the whole body was highly approved as a dress form. In the writings of early explorers and missionaries, women in the district are described as 'unclad' (Chadwick, 1917; Condon, 1910; Cunningham, 1923 -describing events in 1904; Roscoe, 1909; Stanley, 1875). In reality, the women who were being described as 'unclad' were fully dressed in the shiboya and liboya.

Among the Baluyia, the shiboya and liboya dress of women was very important and respected (Osogo, 1966). This dress symbolized a woman's status, purity and virtue. Burt (1980) states that for a male to touch this female dress was an act tantamount to rape. In the late nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries, a woman not dressed in a shiboya and liboya was considered 'unclad' by the society. For a woman to be 'unclad' was a taboo which could only be counteracted through the sacrifice of livestock. The rituals cleansed the woman and were intended to prevent disasters to all she may have contaminated. Thus when Chief Mulama outlawed the wearing of the liboya and shiboya in 1919, it was a traumatic experience for the women as they felt completely 'unclad' in the 'kanichi' fabrics even though they covered up more of the body. The definition of 'dress' is culture bound. What constitutes dress is very much dependent on the values and perceptions of the people viewing it, or the context in which it is worn. For example, among the Baluyia, when the 'kanichi' was forced onto the women, at first they did not refer to it as an 'ingubo' (vernacular for dress), but instead used a word which means 'thing'. Women continued to wear the shiboya and liboya dress beneath the 'thing' in order to cover their bodies. After several years, the values and attitudes had changed sufficiently and the 'thing' came to be accepted as a 'dress'. This was a result of the changing religious beliefs and acculturation that occurred after several years and which merged the Baluyia and 'Western' concepts of dress.

In later years after the society had changed to other forms of dress, importance and meaning were still given to dress as in the past. For example, in 1949/51, the 'koka-

kola' (cocacola) dress was in fashion. Some women in the district threatened to commit suicide if their husbands did not purchase the 'koka kola' dress for them. Bohannan (1960) who carried out a study on homicide and suicide among the Baluyia between 1940 and 1960 found that the majority of women in his sample, (at least 70%) committed suicide due to unhappy marriages. Thus dress gifts may have been evaluated by women as critical to a happy marriage.

Acculturation, protest and dress

Acculturation, which is an intercultural contact that may result in one cultural or social group assimilating the cultural traits of another, was evident in the relationship between the Baluyia and other indigenous people such as the Maasai, Teso, Kalenjin, Luo, Swahili and Arabs of the Kenya coast as well as with foreigners such as the British and the Indians.

In Kakamega district during the late nineteenth century, there were Maasai warriors employed by the Nabongos. Maasai people are renowned for their ornaments in East Africa. Their presence definitely impacted on dress in the district. Thomson (1885) mentions that young Baluyia men wore bands of metal wire similar to those worn by the Maasai. The Baluyia purchased some of their ornaments from the Luo (see Appendix 4), and some of their fur capes from the Kalenjin.

When the European missionaries and colonial

administrators came to live in the district from the early twentieth century onwards, they preferred that the indigenous people wear 'Western' dress. Due to the colonial influence over the years, more and more indigenous people adopted 'Western' dress. 'Western' dress was particularly popular among the teachers and early politicians, and was initially considered a sign of 'progressiveness'.

The Islamic faith had also been established in the district since the late nineteenth century, but adherents were concentrated around the trading centers and did not grow in number as fast as the adherents to the Christian religion. Christians multiplied in large numbers as new converts would go out to evangelize the village community. However, even indigenous converts to Islam changed their forms of dress to follow that of Islam.

Dress was also used as a medium to protest the colonial occupation and administration. For example, the adherents of the Mumbo Independent Church rejected 'Western' dress and chose to dress like the ancient Hebrews (Middleton, 1963; Osogo, 1966; Ogot, 1971). The adherents of Elija Masinde's 'Dini ya musambwa', a religious group in 1935 rejected not only the colonial presence and administration but also the whole Western way of life including dress (Osogo, 1966; Whipper, 1971). Towards independence in the 1950's, as the spirit of nationalism swept through Kenya, indigenous politicians also turned to indigenous dress forms and

rejected Western dress forms as a protest to the colonial presence.

However, after independence the politicians went back to wearing 'Western' dress forms. By the early 1960's this form of dress was considered the norm across the country. A process of 'cultural authentication' had taken place. According to Kaiser (1990), cultural authentication is a concept developed by Eicher and Erekosima in 1980 that explains the process by which a culture can turn an unfamiliar idea or object into a familiar valued one. In this instance, 'Western' dress forms had over the years become a valued part of the indigenous culture and were no longer considered foreign. What in the late nineteenth century was considered to be 'Western' dress has today become the norm and is now considered indigenous dress and indigenous Kenyan meaning is attached to the various styles.

Indigenous dress forms of the past did not completely disappear. What changed were the contexts in which they were worn. Over the years, indigenous dress in the district has been used increasingly for special occasions and ceremonies and less as daily wear. For example, in the 1930's, the shiboya and liboya, originally married women's dress, were being used by unmarried adolescent girls when taking food to their brothers who were undergoing initiation.

There was also evidence of 'temporal authentication' in

Kakamega district. Temporal authentication is a process suggested by Jasper and Roach-Higgins (1987) which distinguishes how people reach back into their own cultural heritage to borrow elements of dress for contemporary adaptation. An example is when Elija Masinde's 'Dini ya musambwa' adherents in the 1930's and Kenya's African politicians in the 1950's reached back into their own cultural heritage and borrowed dress for contemporary adaption as a protest against colonial presence. Thus, as Hamilton and Hamilton (1989) declared, dress serves as a cultural symbol and a metaphor of the social world of a people.

The fashion process in the district.

The fashion process can be approached at a collective level (fashion diffusion) which describes the collective movement of styles through a social system, and at an individual level (fashion adoption) which is an individual's decision-making process in the adoption of any style (Forsythe et al, 1991). The fashion diffusion and adoption process will be discussed here as it relates to the society in Kakamega district during the period covered by this study.

In diffusion research, Everet Rodgers in his model in the 1960's suggested ideal types in the diffusion of new ideas. The model is a bell shaped curve representing stages of adoption plotted over time and corresponds to a normal

distribution curve. The ideal types are innovators (the first to adopt a new idea or dress, 2 1/2% of the population), early adopters (13 1/2% of the population), early majority (34% of the population), late majority (34 % of the population), and laggards (16% of the population), and in 1971 he added non-adopters (Behling, 1992). The above-mentioned fashion diffusion model was made for a post industrial society. Theories made for post-industrial states are not always relevant for pre-industrial states. During the first half of the twentieth century, Kakamega district was not a post industrial state. The above-mentioned fashion diffusion process is applicable where people have a choice in the type of dress worn.

When Chief Mulama made the declaration that banned the wearing of the shiboya and liboya in 1919, the dress forms changed drastically without necessarily following any of the models on diffusion research. The women especially were forced to adopt a new dress and thus it would have been difficult to distinguish innovators from late majority and so on, as it was the law to wear the new forms of dress known as 'kanichi'. In such a case, the fear of the consequences of breaking the law could have influenced the pace at which individuals adopted the new dress. They had little choice.

Although initially in 1919 the people had little choice in what dress they wore due to the sumptuary law, in later

years, there is evidence of different levels of individual fashion adoption. For example, photographs taken in the same instant show men and women dressed in varying styles. In Wagner (1970) (plates 13 B and 14), men dressed in the 'shuka', 'lisero', cotton shirts and shorts are in the same photograph. Women dressed in 'kanichi', 'machengo'and 'mutunga' styles are all in the same photograph. Wagner's photographs were taken between 1934 and 1938. The above mentioned styles came into fashion years apart but there were people still dressed in samples of each in the same photographic instant.

The oldest fashion adoption theory of fashion diffusion at the turn of the century by Simmel in Kaiser (1985), asserts that styles trickle down from the upper classes and elite. In Kenya, by independence, there was a combination of indigenous structure and class structure. For example, there was social stratification in the society based on indigenous lines such as the inherited Nabongoship (king by name only by the 1950's), clan, eldership, and ritual leadership as well as a class structure that bears resemblance to the elite, middle class and working class of the Western world. When examined against the indigenous structure, the trickle down theory did not really apply as there were certain dress forms that were confined to the Nabongo and leaders alone, such as the royal bangle, staff, and certain skin cloaks. Again, at the turn of the century,

the Nabongo, and some of his immediate family who formed what could be termed an elite class were conservative and did not necessarily adopt the new dress styles. Hence, the trickle down theory did not apply in the society then.

Inspiration for design and naming of dress.

Most informants for this study used a phrase in Luluyia to describe a dress worn in their times that loosely translates to 'then a dress appeared on the market with the name...' This gave the impression that the dress styles were from a source external to the consumer. However, as dress was locally made in the district, it is likely that the local tailors were the designers of dress after the 1920's. It is also possible that the local people were the ones who set the fashions and had control over what was considered fashionable. For example in the late 1930's when young men commonly wore flared shorts, in the event that the tailors did not make the shorts flared enough, the young men would reject the order.

The exact source of design inspiration in the district could not be proven. Dress in Britain and other parts of Europe (Bigelow, 1979; Laver, 1979) did not tally exactly with those in the district. Thus these dress styles originated from within Kenya. However, it is possible that the basic construction techniques originated from Britain as did the names of the pattern pieces eg. collar, skirt, even though the majority of established tailors who apprenticed

tailors from the district were in most cases originally from India. The dress styles worn by some individuals such as Chief Mulama tally with British dress during that period. The 'kanzu' and 'lichoo' worn by some leaders and elders were similar in design to those worn by the Swahilis and Arabs living along the Kenya coast.

The inspiration for dress names came from various sources. For example, a dress name could be derived from the fabric from which it was made. The 'kanichi' was both a dress name and a fabric name. The dress name could also indicate the place where the fabric came from. For example, the Kasmiri suit fabric was from Kashmir in India. A dress name could be descriptive; for example, the 'mutunga' translates to 'something straight' and that is how the dress looked. A dress name could be influenced by an event; for example, the 'indege', a word which translates as 'aeroplane'. During 1939 and 1945 when this style appeared, the Second World War was taking place and many aeroplanes were overflying the area, otherwise an unusual phenomenon. A name could be influenced by the fabric print. For example, in 'queen mshika tumbo', the print in the dress was that of the crowned head of a white queen. The 'kokakola' dress fabric had red and white or blue and white prints with a border. 'Kokakola' translates as 'cocacola'. Although cocacola was not among the aerated drinks commonly consumed in the district at that time (1949/51), it was already being

marketed in the larger towns. Some dress names were adopted straight from English. In the case of the 'tight' dress in the late 1950's, not only the design, but also the name was adopted from English.

To conclude, this thesis has examined the types of dress worn in Kakamega district from the late nineteenth century up to independence in 1963. This period covers the time when the indigenous people ruled themselves, the coming and establishment of the colonial government and the final return to independence in 1963. The socio-cultural change the society underwent is reflected in the dress worn. Although the study of dress in Kakamega district is still in its infancy, several meaningful insights into the culture of the people were found to be manifest in dress. At least two chiefs changed their dress from indigenous to 'Western' and enforced dress change on their areas of jurisdiction. The women especially had to let go of their own indigenous sense of morality as reflected in their attachment of the shiboya and liboya, and to adopt new morality laws that dictated covering up as much of the body as possible. Some men on the other hand felt that the suits, and 'kanzus' they had to wear were more convenient than the 'lisero' which they had to keep turning around when they met their mothers-in-law. Eventually the indigenous dress was found in ritual contexts such as when adolescent girls delivered food to their brothers in seclusion after initiation.

Suggestions for future research.

This study has produced a broad diachronic survey of continuity and change in dress in Kakamega district of Western Kenya and the impacting socio-cultural factors. The study has also generated new knowledge in clothing and textiles. This history of dress in Kakamega district is a new resource for students to refer to that highlights the dress culture of the past.

In Kenya there are peoples of different cultural backgrounds, and their dress histories may vary substantially from that of the Baluyia of Kakamega district. Future studies could focus on other peoples of Kenya in order to give a holistic picture of the history of dress in Kenya. More research on dress is also needed in the less researched cultures of Africa. The various studies will give insight into the cultural values attached to dress forms as well as continuity and change in fashion. The studies will therefore contribute to the development of global theories of dress.

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APPENDIX 1

Photodocumentation record.

(For the photographs of, or copies made of photographic data).

(1) Film number.....Exposure number.....

(2) Source name/institutional/private .....

(3) Literature source:
Author.....
Article/book title.....
Journal title.....
Vol. no.....
Pages.....
Place of publication.....
Date of publication.....
Call no. and library.....
Caption or written documentation.....
.....

(5) If private photograph (owner).....
Date taken.....
Photographer information.....
Context in which photograph was taken.....
.....

(6) Items pertaining to dress as seen from the photograph (note definition of dress in this study).
On head.....
On left arm.....
On right arm.....
On upper torso (waist up).....
On waist.....
On lower torso.....
On legs (from thigh to ankle).....
On feet.....
Items being held (eg. fly whisk).....

Notes.....
.....
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APPENDIX 2.

Research question guide.

NB. The questions addressed will be paraphrased during the interviews with informants. This list is a guide for the researcher hence the technical terms included.

Personal questions.

-What type of dress did you wear as a child, a youth, and as an adult before 1963?
-Which dress did you wear during various occasions and functions e.g. weddings, funerals, dances, initiation?
-Which years were the dress that you described worn?
-What socio-cultural factors of importance did you note as having influenced the manner in which you or others dressed in Kakamega district prior to 1963?

Other research questions.

a. What was the day to day and occasional dress worn between 1883 and 1920?
b. What was the dress worn by the initiated?
c. At approximately what time period in years was the 'long ago' referred to in publications?
d. What items pertaining to dress were traded by Andrew Dick and other traders?
e. What was a kanichi and how was it worn?
f. What if any, were the sumptuary laws in Kakamega district?
g. What effect, if any did the migration of the male population to work in distant areas have on dress of family members.
h. What effect, if any did the change in roles of family members have on dress?
i. What effect did the arrival and spread of the sewing machine have on dress in Kakamega district?
j. Did the spirit of nationalism and political awareness have any influence on dress in Kakamega between 1930 and 1963?
k. Was there any correlation between school enrollment and the pace at which different dress forms were adopted?
l. What forms of dress were used as school uniform?
m. Who designed and manufactured the school uniforms?
o. What was the 'European dress' that was referred to in the Swahili dictionary of 1909?
p. Did dressing according to age, sex, status and occupation only apply when wearing more indigenous forms of dress, or does it apply to all changing forms of dress?

APPENDIX 3

Manufacture of shiboya and liboya.

The shiboya and liboya could be made from papyrus reeds 'amaturu'. The inner fibrous part of the papyrus stems which was cream in color was dried and twined. That is, 2 yarns would be twisted separately by rubbing between the palm of the hand on the thigh of the leg (okhusiira). Two twines would then be twisted together to form a two ply string. The yarns were then attached to another that would act as a waist tie. Then a line or two of weaving would be carried out to keep them aligned. They were all knotted at the ends to prevent raveling. The strings for both the front and the back piece were treated similarly.

Apart from papyrus, the shiboya and liboya were also made of banana fibers. In this instance, the outer brown almost dry skin (amakoko) of the banana tree was pulled off and rubbed between the hands to release the fibers (okhunyukha). The fibers would then be twisted and woven together.

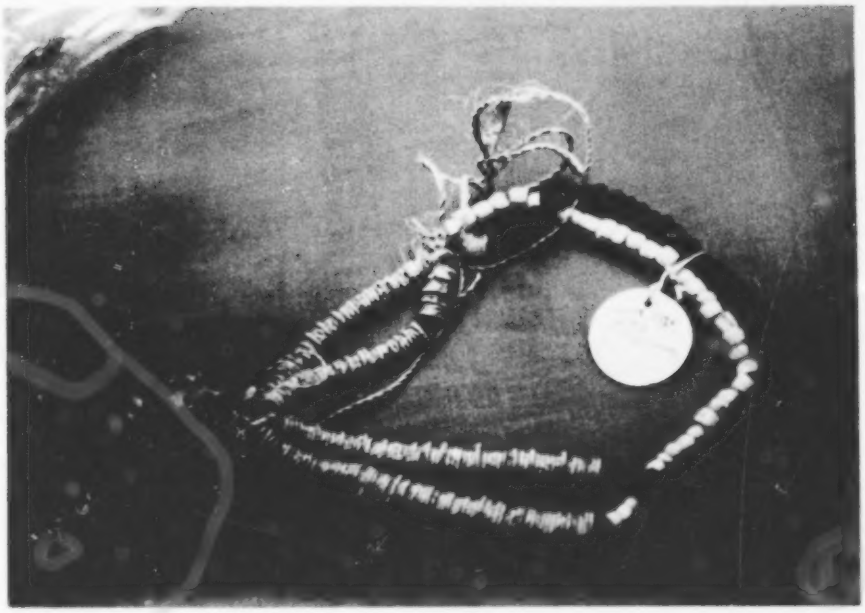
The sisal plant, especially the one that grew on an ant hill was also used as a raw material for shiboya and liboya. It is not clear why only the plants that grew on an anthill were chosen. Probably they had finer fibers. In this instance the sisal leaves would be collected and pounded and the pulp would be scraped off. The fibers would be dried in the sun but never boiled. The finished twined strings would stand out stiffly and this material was suitable for the thick shiboya and liboya called 'Owuyo'. The 'Owuyo' was thick and flared and was used for attending special occasions like weddings, visits, dances, and other important celebrations. The shiboya and liboya that was used for everyday wear was not thick and was called 'akhaseche'.

The shiboya and liboya could also be made of animal tail hairs. However this was expensive and could only be afforded by the very rich.

The twining and weaving of shiboya and liboya (okhulukha amavoya), was carried out by elderly women. Not all elderly women wove. For example, in a village, there would probably be one or two and they would charge a basketful of millet for the dress. The elderly women who made this dress would in turn teach the younger generation. When the weaving was done the elderly women would allow the younger ones to assist in the dyeing process.

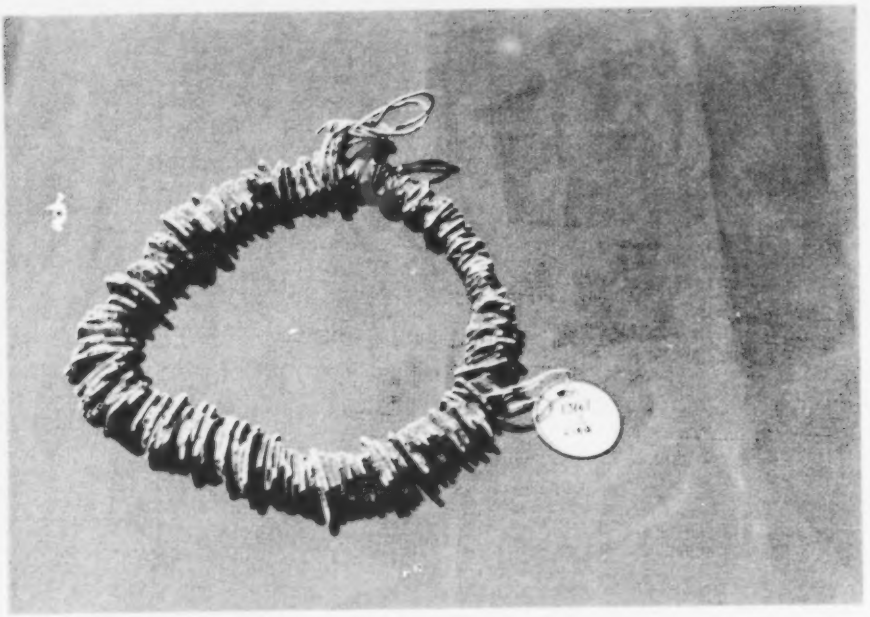
When the shiboya and liboya were woven, they were usually of a cream color. Black was a popular color and therefore, the dress would be boiled in a clay pot together with leaves of a plant referred to as 'litoto lia mumwalo' in order to darken it. Alternatively, it could be soaked in black river clay (itsiibe) until it was black. The seeds of sesame, a tropical herbaceous plant yielding an edible oil,

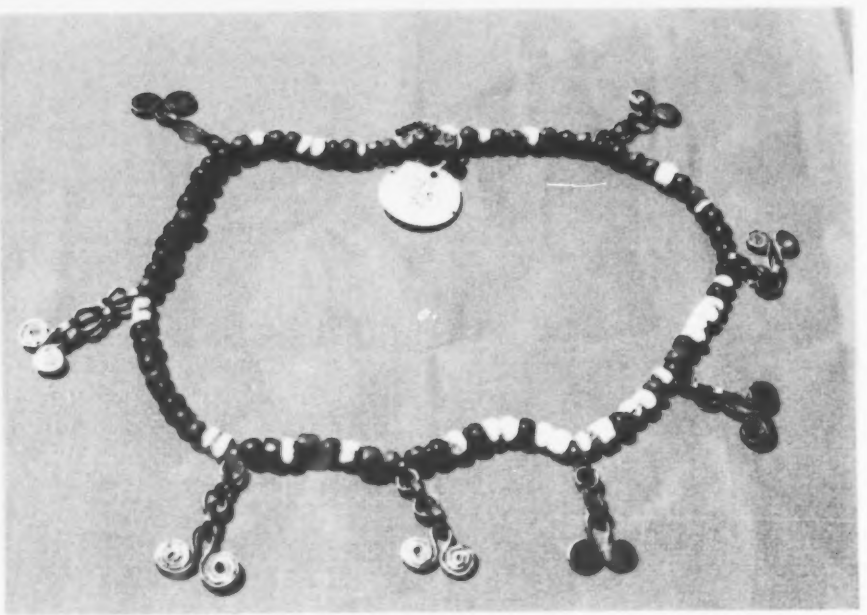
would be fried until they were almost black. The fried seeds would then be pounded and the resulting oil would be rubbed onto the dress to aid in making it darker, supple and longer lasting. The strings of the shiboya and liboya had to be very neat and well aligned and placed close together. One reason was so that the parts of the body which were meant to be covered would not show through.



APPENDIX 4. Examples of ornaments worn by Baluyia women c. 1910.
Dates on artifacts indicate when the artifact was collected for the museum and not when it was made.

Photos by N. Omronji, October 1991.
Courtesy of the National Museum of Kenya.





APPENDIX 4 contd. Examples of ornaments which would be purchased from the Luo by the Baluyia c. 1910. Dates on the artifacts indicate when the artifact was collected for the museum and not when it was made.

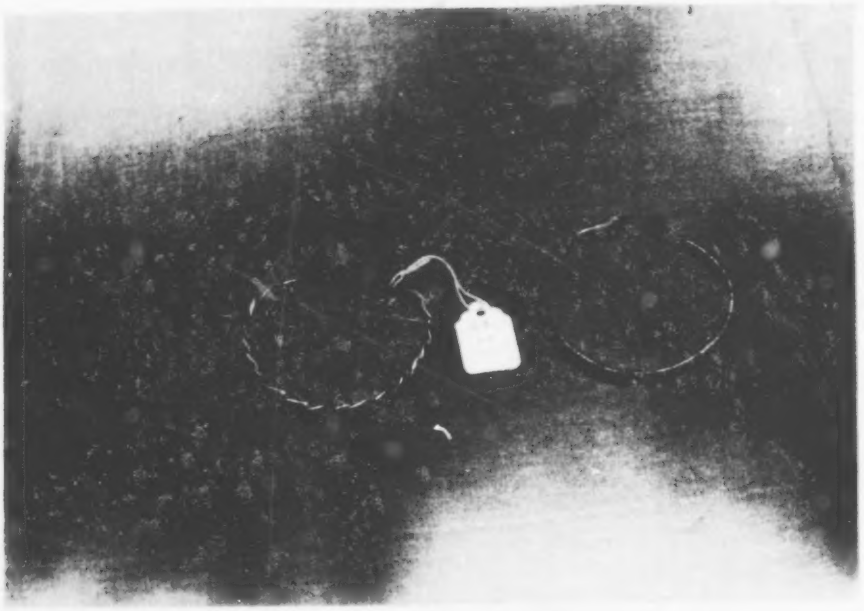
Photos by N. Omronji, October 1991. Courtesy of the National Museum of Kenya.

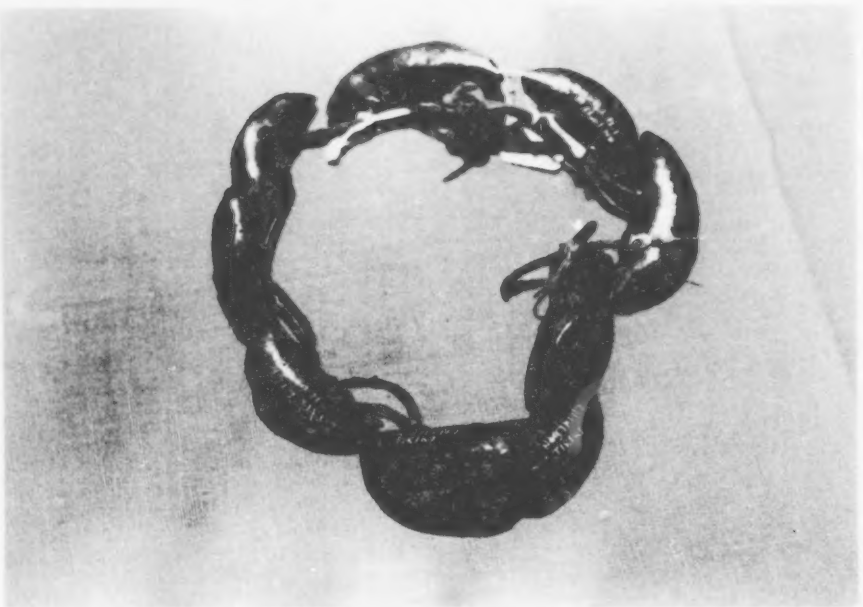
APPENDIX 5

Manufacture of iron ornaments.

Much of the iron used in the mentioned ornaments was from Samia in Busia district of Western Kenya. According to informants, and they all agreed on this, it was the Abang'ale clan who in the past were gifted blacksmiths. They smelted the iron ore and made ornaments. The Abang'ale clan members can be found scattered in many villages in Kakamega district although they originally came from Busia district (Osogo, 1966).
Joseph Thomson noted in 1883 that:

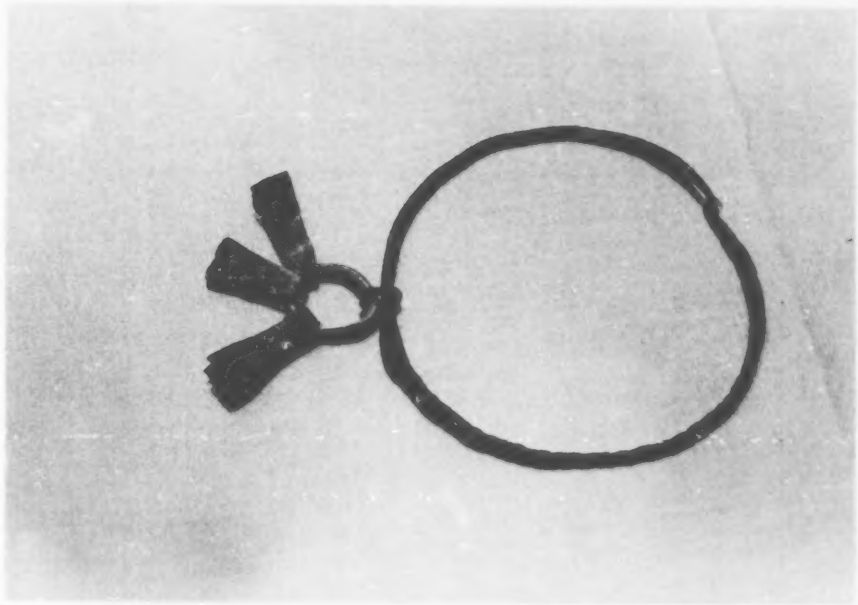
> The iron ... produced is first class and the Wakavirondo, especially those of Samia [in Busia], are remarkably clever blacksmiths. They make wire in imitation of the coast sengenge, only it is square instead of round. This takes a beautiful silvery polish, and is worn by young swells around their necks, arms and legs after the fashion prevalent among Maasai women' only the coil is not continuous but is jointed on ring by ring...
> (Thomson, 1885, p. 162).





APPENDIX 6. Examples of Baluyia iron ornaments c. 1910. Dates on artifacts indicate when the artifact was collected for the museum and not when it was made.

Photos by N. Omronji, October 1991.
Courtesy of the National Museum of Kenya.



APPENDIX 6 contd. Examples of Baluyia iron ornaments c. 1910. Dates on artifacts indicate when the artifact was collected for the museum and not when it was made.

Photos by N. Omron'i, October 1991.
Courtesy of the National Museum of Kenya.

APPENDIX 7

List of informants.

N.B. Initials, rather than full names shall be used for those informants who requested anonymity.

Abuyeka Aggrey- Aged about 62 is a retired train driver. He worked for the East African Railways and Harbors Company (now Kenya Railways). During his employment, he drove trains through the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania and met many people. He enjoyed discussing the dress worn in his time as well as the dress forms his parents had worn. He is from Kaimosi and speaks the Luluyia language.

Mr. An'gona- Aged over 60 years, is a Prince of the house of Nabongo Mumia. He fought in the Second World War on the British side. He discussed dress of the Nabongos, of African soldiers in the world war as well as dress in general. He is from Matawa and speaks Luluyia.

Anna Karani- Aged about 60 is a home maker who lovingly looks after her grandchildren and tends her vegetable gardens. She preferred discussing dress forms worn by her grandmother. She is from Ekero and speaks Luluyia.

Erina Were- Aged about 60 is a small scale mixed farmer. She uses some of her produce at home and sells the rest as a source of money income. Erina was very enthusiastic and together with a group of women recounted the fashions in their time until independence. She is from Kakamega and speaks Luluyia.

Esteri Weche- Aged over 80 is the widow of one of the first indigenous African Christian pastors in the district. She has a fine collection of family photographs which depict dress over the years. She is from Namasoli and speaks Luluyia.

F. A.- Aged over 50 is a home maker and ardent participant at the local church. She discussed the dress fashions worn in her lifetime. She is from Kaimosi and speaks Luluyia.

Sister Francis Okondo- Aged over 55 is a senior nun in the Mission convent in Kakamega. She was among the first girls to go to school from her locality. She is very knowledgeable about the ethnography and history of the Baluyia. She was interviewed in Nairobi and speaks Luluyia.

Maloba Openda- Aged over 60 is a mixed farmer and a retired teacher and civil servant. He has an excellent well documented collection of family photographs, many depicting dress over the years. He is from Mumias and speaks Luluyia.

Ireni Mudenyo- Aged over 60 is the wife of one of Chief Mulama's brothers. She loves to sing and tell the young generation folklore and stories about her experiences. She remembered and sang dress related songs collected during this study. She is from Ibinda and speaks Luluyia.

Dr. Jane Nandwa- Aged about late thirties was studying Literature and Folklore. She was interviewed in Edmonton and had invaluable information on Baluyia history, folklore and dress. She was also very enthusiastic about this study and always encouraged me not to despair. Dr. Nandwa passed away at the end of September, 1992.

J. N.- Aged about 50 is a home maker. She grows vegetable for home consumption. She discussed the dress styles she wore as a young woman. She is from Luanda and speaks Luluyia.

Jenifa Ocholi- Aged about 60 is a homemaker. She tends her garden and in her spare time meets with other women to share ideas. She loves to sing and it is said of her that she sings as sweetly as a bird. She remembered and sang most of the songs quoted in this study. She also discussed dress forms worn by her grandmother and mother. She is from Matawa and speaks Luluyia.

John Ajuoga- Aged over 65 is a tailor. He apprenticed to other tailors and opened his own business in the 1940's. He made illustrations of the dress styles he used to sew and described the pattern pieces too for the researcher. He is from Mumias and speaks Luluyia.

Joshua Shikwati- Was born around 1900. He went through the informal indigenous education system. He knew all his clan's lineages from memory as well as the unusual events that happened such as wars, foreign visitors, famines etc. He enjoyed speaking about dress history. He fought in local wars before the pax Brittanica. He is from Malava and speaks Luluyia.

Karani Werima- Aged over 70 is a small scale farmer. He took part in the Second World War on the British side. During the war, he travelled up to Somalia and Ethiopia. He also worked for some time in the Kakamega gold mines before they shut down. He described the kinds of dress he wore during the war and in the Kakamega gold mines. He is from

Ekero and speaks Luluyia.

M. T.- Aged over 60 is a homemaker. She was one of the informants who demonstrated how the kanichi was tied. She is from Kakamega and speaks Luluyia.

Maria Saleh Ndombera- Aged over 80 is a staunch Moslem. Although quite ill at the time of research, she willingly took time to talk about dress and describe ornaments worn in the past in the district. She is from Koyonzo and speaks Luluyia.

Mary Kwena- Aged over 50 is a retired teacher. She now practices paultry farming. Her mother still had the indigenous ornaments which she wore in her youth. She enjoyed discussing dress and had valuable information. She is from Buhuyi and speaks Luluyia.

Mumia Mumia- In his late 40's is a young son of the late Nabongo Mumia. Although extremely official and dignified, Mumia eventually allowed the researcher access to some family photographs depicting dress. He is from Mumias and speaks Luluyia.

Mzee Opaka- Born at around 1900 was very willing to talk about the past, He fought in many local wars. Although he preferred to discuss wars rather than dress, he was kind enough to discuss dress on condition that in the next interview we would discuss wars. He also weaves baskets in a technique that is rarely seen. He is from Butere and speaks Luluyia.

Nasiche- Aged about 70 is a home maker. She was visiting one of the other informants and thus there was the opportunity to interview her too. She discussed dress worn in her lifetime. She is from Bukura and speaks Luluyia.

Osundwa Karani- In his 30's and a local photographer. His father is an elder. He assisted by taking photographs of present day dress in kakamega district. He is from Ekero and speaks Luluyia.

Counsellor K. Ramadhan- Aged over 60 was from a family with Islamic ties that went far into history. He was very willing to discuss not only dress history but to also search around for surviving artifacts. He is from Shibale and speaks Luluyia.

R. N.- Aged in her twenties was invaluable for locating the elders in one of the localities, as well as collecting any photographs they had that could be helpful for this study. She is from Vihiga and speaks Luluyia.

Salome Nafula- Aged over 50 is a mixed farmer. She was a very knowledgeable informant on dress. She also explained some of the difficult terms in the more ancient version of Luluyia that the informants born around 1900 spoke. She is from Mumias and speaks Luluyia.

Wamukoya Netya- Aged in his 30's works in his families' photographic studio. He identified many negatives of photographs taken in the earlier part of the century and was willing to print some out. He also gathered information from his grandparents. He is from Mwiboma and speaks Luluyia.

Wanikete Luchiri- (Retired Councillor, advisor to Nabongo Mumia and commander to Mumia's army). Wanikete, born in the 1890's was invaluable. His ethnographic artifacts were very old and in excellent condition. They offered a glimpse into the history of the Baluyia. Some of his artifacts had belonged to his great grandfather. He was one of the few people who had carefully kept most his dress forms. He was from Indangalasia and spoke Luluyia.
Wanikete Luchiri passed away in August, 1992.

Archdeacon Wanalo -Aged about 68 was knowledgeable and willing to discuss dress and fashion in the district. He was interviewed in Nairobi and speaks Luluyia.

Yohana Makokha- Aged about 70 was a hides and skins dealer. He owned dress and ornaments that had belonged to his father and was willing to discuss that as well as the more recent dress forms. His son, Ishmael aged about 18 was a willing model for demonstrations on how the dress was worn. He is from Musanda and speaks Luluyia.

In addition to the above, there are also other persons who spared their time to comment on dress even though they were not formally interviewed.

APPENDIX 8

Glossary of indigenous terms.

Abakalibo- A Baluyia clan.

Abakatikiro- Luyianized term referring to chief's advisors all of whom were male.

Abakhana- Young females (before puberty).

Abakhoone- A Baluyia clan.

Abatoro- Babies.

Abatukhu- Middle age.

Abang'ale- A Baluyia clan.

Akhaseche- The thin shiboya and liboya for at-home use.

Amatongotongo- Clay beads.

Amaturu- Papyrus reeds.

Amawudo- Ostrich feathers.

Amerikani- Unbleached white cotton.

Bakhulundu- Respected old age (male).

Buibui- A dark colored gown consisting of a veil and worn by Moslem women in Kenya over other dress when going out.

Dini ya musambwa- An independent church movement led by Elija Masinde in 1934 and which advocated a return to Baluyia indigenous practices.

Dini ya Roho- An independent church movement in Kenya formed in 1921 as a reaction against some of the practices advocated by the missionaries.

Ebitiri- Copper or tin wire worn on upper arms or wrists.

Ebiuma- Neck ornaments.

Emisang.. - Neck ornaments from carved ostrich shells.

Eshikon'go- A cane with a rounded top.

Esikhonera- A wide strap of leather held by a string and passing between the legs. It was worn by boys.

Gomas- A long dress worn by women in Buganda. At the turn of the century, it was made of barkcloth. Today other commonly available fabrics such as silk or polyester are used.

Igweli- Crescent shaped item made from ivory and worn on the head.

Ikutusi/Ituru- Colobus fur.

Iloti- A long trouser with a pull cord at the waist worn with a kanzu.

Imbwori- Zebra tail.

Indabushi- A staff carried by an elder or ruler.

Indege- A dress with a four piece skirt and a square neckline.

Ingara- A circular shape.

Ingubo- A dress.

Ingwe- Leopard skin cloak.

Ipala- White river clay.

Isimbikhira/Isimbishira- Long tail feathers of a rare bird, probably extinct.

Itsiibe- Black river clay.

Iyamwamu- Forest animal of conflicting identity whose fur was used to make cloaks and which was found along the forests of the river Yala.

'Japan'- A white cotton fabric with a plain weave.

Kabaka- King of Buganda.

Kanga- See Lesso.

Kanichi- Fabric of about 3 yards long of a navy blue or brown color worn by women.

Kanzu- A long ankle length shirt-like garment worn by men.

Kasmiri- A dark colored suit for men. The fabric came from Kashmir in India.

Katana- A light colored (white or cream) suit for men with

turn up trousers.

Ketera- A sleeveless vest-like garment with a round neckline.

Keya- A term used for 'Kenya African Rifles', a battalion in the Second World War.

Khaki jela- A strong khaki fabric worn around 1918.

Khodoro- Heavy blankets made of sheeps' wool and draped by elderly males over their shoulders.

Kikoi- A hand woven fabric from the Kenya coast with stripes in different colors and tassels at both ends.

Kokakola- A dress made from white and red or blue and red print fabric. Kokakola was a name for both the dress and the fabric.

Kona tatu- A three-point neckline.

'Korea'- A dress with side gathers and a three-point neckline.

Kurin- A green fabric.

Langi- A long trouserwith a pull cord at the waist.

Las makonge- Lace fabric which was blue, pink, or white in color.

Lesso- A printed rectangle of cotton fabric with a print proverb written on it which originated on the East African coast. Same as Kanga.

Liboya- A dress item worn around the waist and falling to the back of the body.

Lichoo- A dark colored robe made of woven fabric and worn over the 'kanzu'.

Likhula- An age group of people usually born in the same year.

Linani- A Baluyia mythical creature which could attain human form and eat up unsuspecting victims.

Lisakha- A war spear with many points.

Lisero- Mens' dress made of calf hide or goat hide softened by rubbing and oiling with ghee (clarified butter).

Lugongo- The head man of an olukongo (see olukongo).

Machengo- A dress made from white cotton fabric with full gathers at the waist.

Machengo mapuli- A dress gathered at the hips.

Machengo 'my dear'- A dress similar to 'machengo' in design, but bought for a woman by her husband.

Madirisha- A dress with six box pleats. Three in the front and three in the back of the skirt.

Majani kabichi- A light green fabric.

Makunguru- A fabric that was either cotton or cotton blend with black and white stripes.

Manyonje- Bands of ivory worn on upper arms or wrists.

Maranda- A sisal skirt used in dances.

Marduff- An off-white plain woven cotton fabric.

Marinda- A dress with a six-gore (six pieces) skirt which was flared and had a 'v' neckline or round neckline.

Mumbo- An independent religious group formen in Kenya in 1921. Its adherents rejected 'Western' dress forms.

Mutunga- A dress which had a straight shape and sometimes gathers at the waist.

Nabongo- Baluyia king.

Ndege 'round'- A dress with a square neckline and circular knee length skirt.

Nusu nguo- A skirt.

Nyasae- Supreme being (same as Wele or Were), creator of the universe and bringer of good luck.

Obukaka- Ear ornaments made from beads threaded on cow tail hairs.

Obunyolo- Metal chains worn round the waist.

Obutiga- Giraffe tail.

Okwako ndara- A dress with a circular skirt which was made up to be a bit longer than the wearer in order to sweep

the ground. An average of ten yards was used to make up one Okwako ndara dress.

Olubaka- An age group of people usually born in the same year (same as oluse and likhuka).

Olukongo- The smallest unit of Baluyia government in the late nineteenth century consisting of several villages in a ridge or valley.

Olumwo- Cast iron razor blade for shaving hair.

Oluse- Age group of people usually born in the same year (same as likhula and olubaka).

Omukasa- Copper or bronze royal bangle.

Omusingo- Buying by pledge and used when buying grain or meat in famine.

Omwimo- A funeral dance held on behalf of a dead elder.

Ongweko- Semi-circular metal bands worn on both ankles.

Orukasa- Rings worn in the ears.

Owuyo- A fuller shiboya and liboya used for happy occassions like weddings etc.

Pepto- An aerated bottled drink with a blackcurrant flavour (same as vimto).

'Queen'- A fabric whose print was of the crowned head of a white queen.

'Queen' mshika tumbo- A dress with elasticized waist usually made from 'queen' fabric (see 'queen').

Shiboko- Red blankets reputed to be very strong.

Shiboya- Dress item of twined strings worn at the waist and falling to the front of the body.

Shimwata- Cowrie shell cap.

Shiremba- A turban.

Shiteitei- A sleeveless round necked dress with a fitted bodice and gathered skirt.

Shuka- A length of fabric either light white cotton or

heavier cotton worn like a toga by males.

Tamanini- A very light cotton similar to the poplin of today.

'Tight'- A tight fitting dress.

Tsimbeka- Designs shaved into female hair.

Tsimuli- Type of grass used for thatching houses.

Tsindebe- Carved wooden sticks worn in ears.

Tsindeke- Bell ornaments worn around the ankles, knees or wrists.

Tsingongo- Plural of olukongo (see olukongo).

Turuki- Cone shaped hat with a flattened top and a tassel hanging down one end.

Vimto- See pepto.

Wele- See Nyasae.

Were- See Nyasae.

APPENDIX 9

FIGURES 1-63.

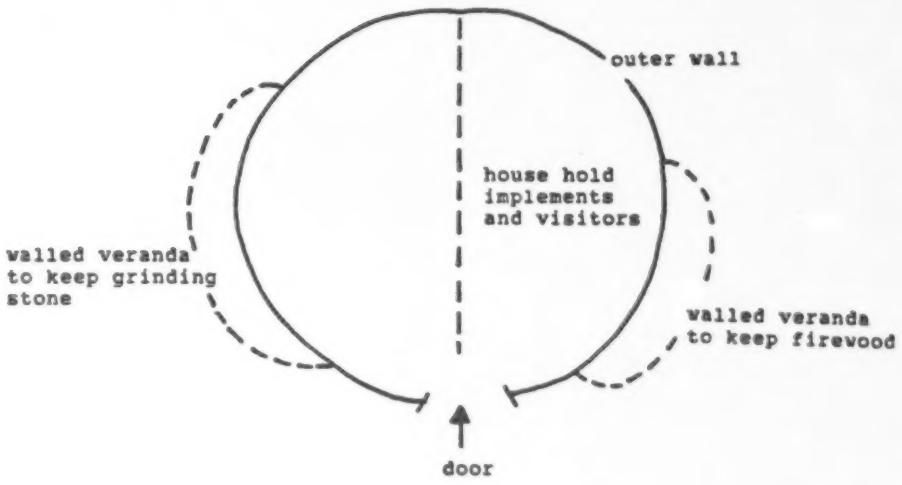


FIGURE 1. Floor plan of house
early twentieth century.

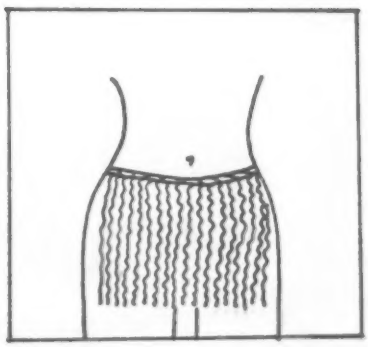


FIGURE 2. Shiboya
(front piece).

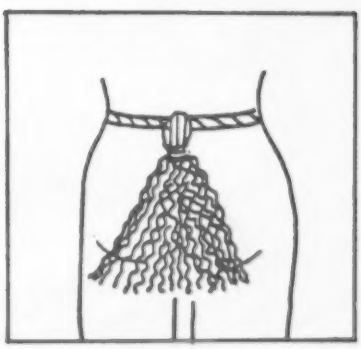


FIGURE 3. Liboya
(back piece).

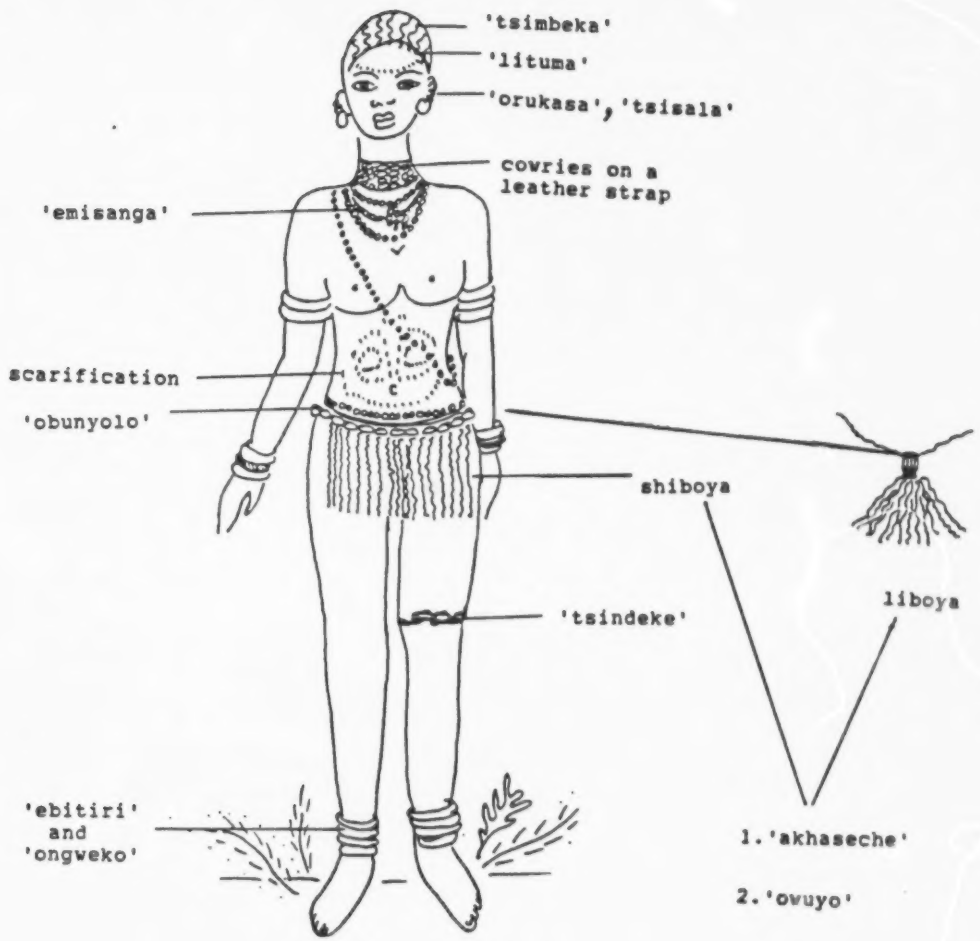


FIGURE 4. Women's dress.

FIGURE 5. Women's style of sitting.

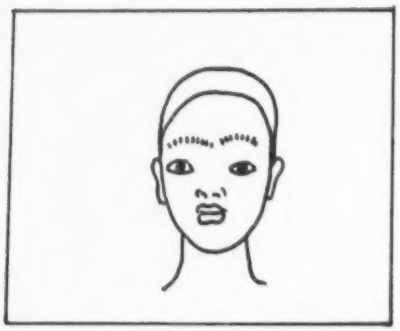


FIGURE 6. 'Oval' forehead.

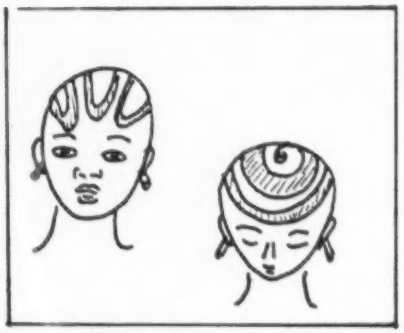


FIGURE 7. Hair design 'tsimbeka'.

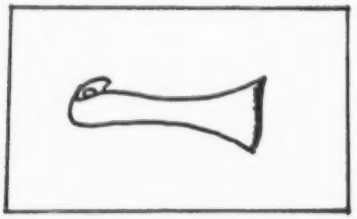


FIGURE 8. Razor blade 'olumwo' for shaving hair.

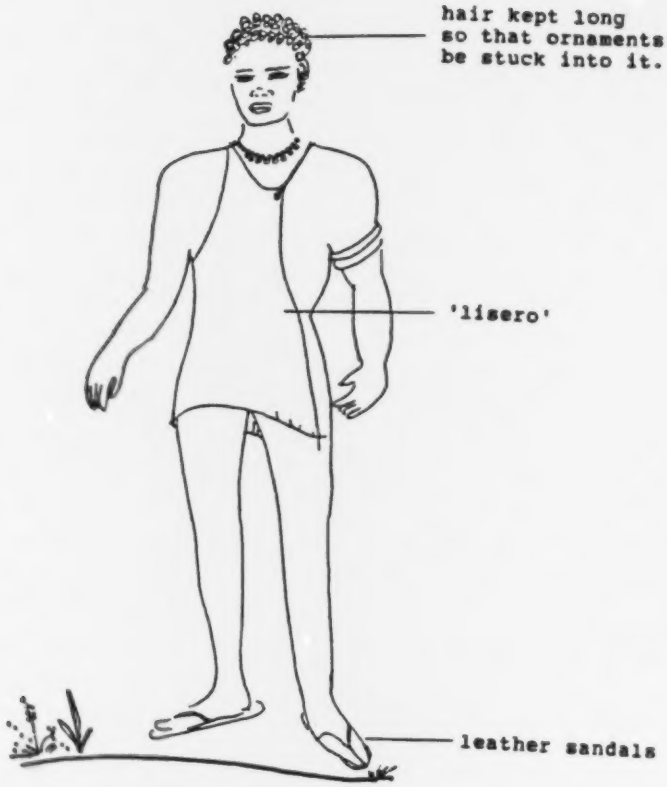


FIGURE 9. Men's dress 'lisero'.

FIGURE 10. Men's leather bag 'eshisikolo'.

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FIGURE 11. Baluyia young men c. 1903-1910. Note From "The religious conceptions of the Baluyia" by N. Stam, 1910, Anthropos 5 p. 362.

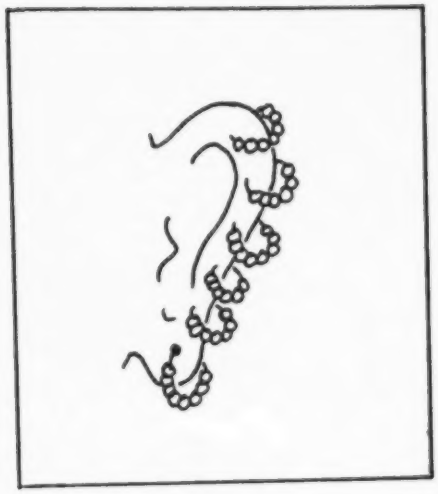

FIGURE 12. Ear ornaments 'obukaka'.

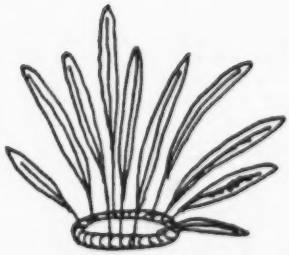

FIGURE 13. Headgear of colorful feathers on a ring.

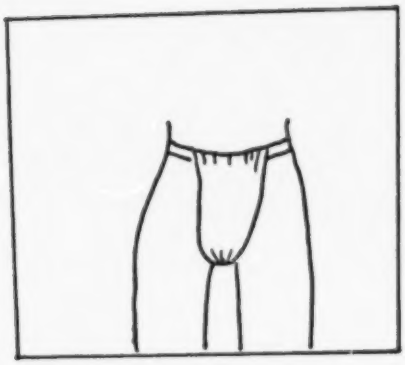

FIGURE 14. Boy's dress 'esikhonera'.

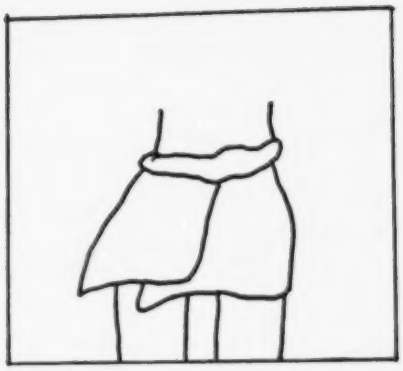

FIGURE 15. Boy's dress.

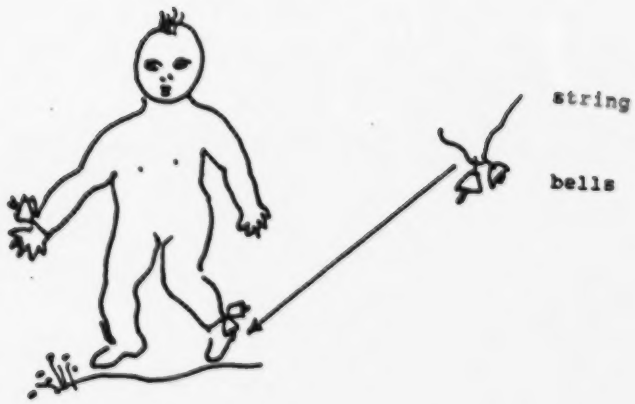

FIGURE 16. Babies' dress.

FIGURE 17 Nabongo's (King's) dress c. 1909-1922.
Courtesy of Nabongo's family.

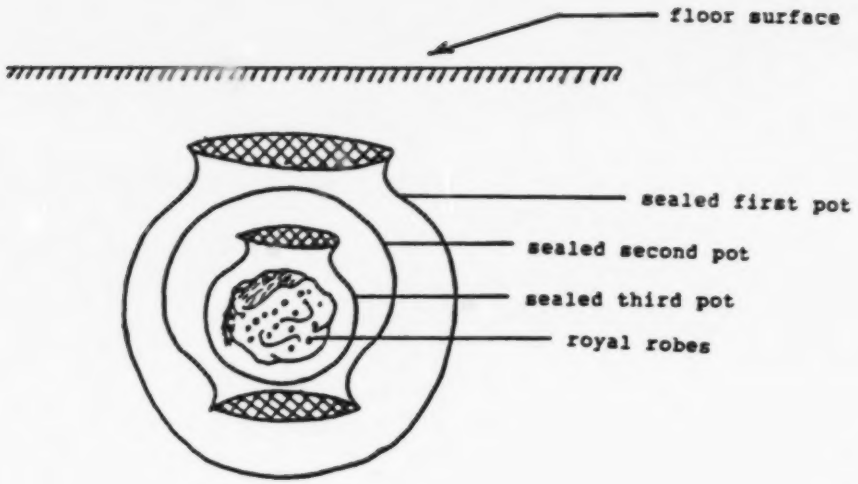

FIGURE 18. Storage of royal robes.

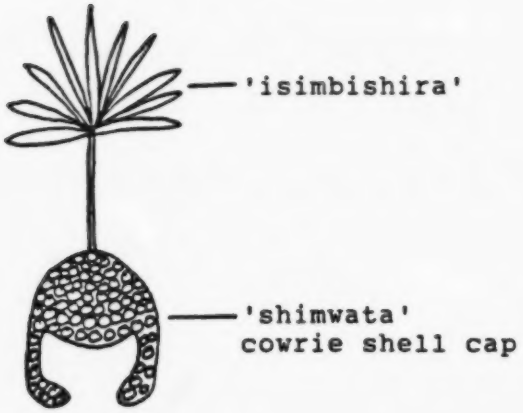

FIGURE 19. Head dress.

FIGURE 20 Nabongo Mumia c. 1908
Courtesy of Nabongo's family.

FIGURE 21 Chief Murunga c. 1908
Courtesy of Nabongo's family.

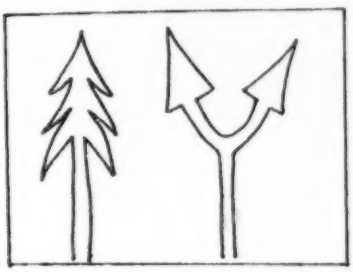

FIGURE 22 Spear heads 'lisakha'

FIGURE 23 War shield

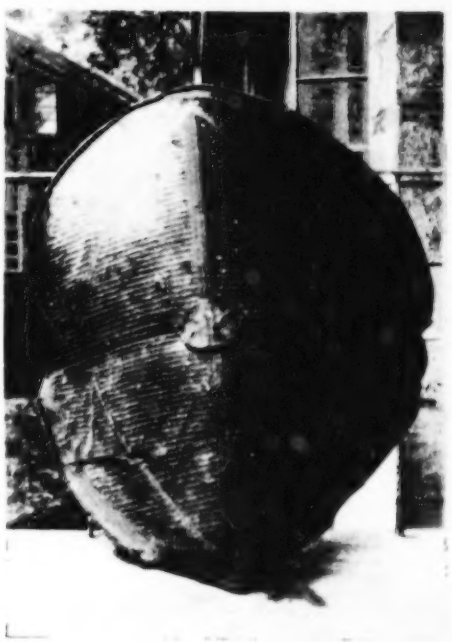

FIGURE 24 War shield

Photos by N. Omronji, October, 1991. Courtesy of the National Museum of Kenya.

FIGURE 25. Dress of former war commander and advisor to the Nabongo.

Photo by N. Omronji, November 1991. Courtesy of Elder Wanikete Luchiri.

FIGURE 26. Chief Mulama on left and his nephew Chitechi Mumia on right c. 1941. Courtesy of Nabongo's family.

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FIGURE 27. Women in Uganda dressed in 'gomas' c. 1904.
Note From Uganda and it's peoples (p.161) by J. Cunningham, 1969, Chicago: Afro Am press.

FIGURE 28. Different methods of tying the 'kanichi' by Baluyia women.

FIGURE 29. a. The 'mutunga' dress.

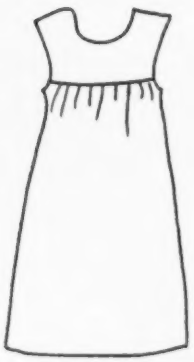

FIGURE 29. b. The 'mutunga' dress.

FIGURE 30. Dancing skirt 'maranda'.

FIGURE 31. The 'shiteitei' dress.

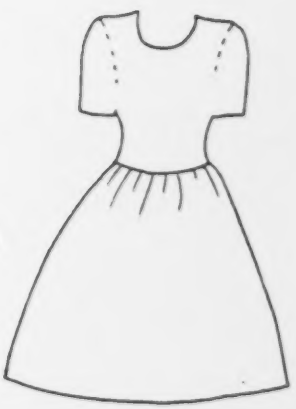

FIGURE 32 a. The 'machengo' dress.

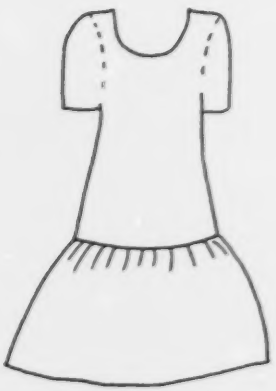

FIGURE 32b. The 'machengo' 'mapuli' dress.

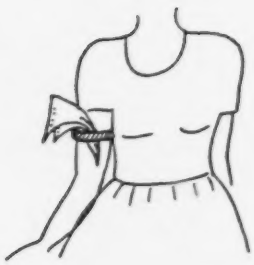

FIGURE 32 c. A handkerchief in an armlet.
Worn with the 'machengo' dress.

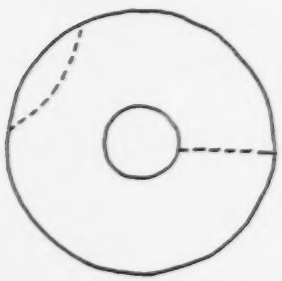

FIGURE 33. The 'okwako ndara' dress.

FIGURE 34. Woman dressed in two lessos.

FIGURE 35. Leaders and dignitaries in Kakamega district c. 1909.
Note. From A history of the Baluyia (p. frontpiece) by J. Osogo, 1966, Nairobi: Oxford University press. Reprinted by permission.

FIGURE 36. Young Baluyia men dressed in the 'kikoi' c. 1929.
Note. From East African journey (1929-1930) (illustration 20) by M. Perham, 1976, London: Faber and Faber ltd. Copyright 1976 by Rhodes House Library, Oxford. Reprinted by permission.

FIGURE 37. The 'shuka'.

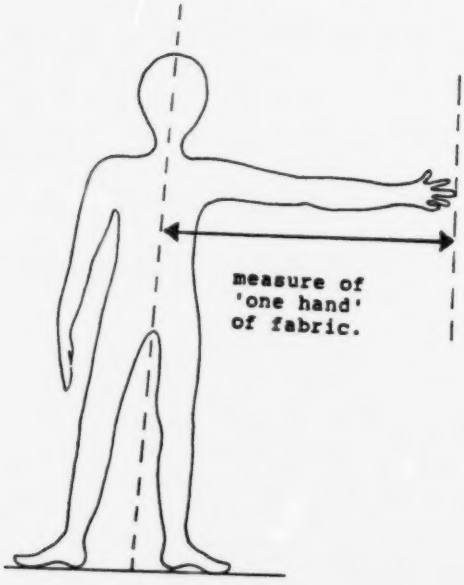

FIGURE 38. A 'hand' of fabric.

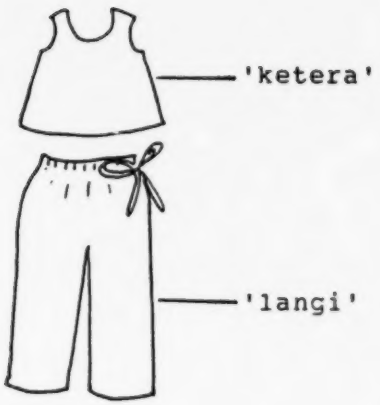

FIGURE 39. The 'ketera' and 'langi'.

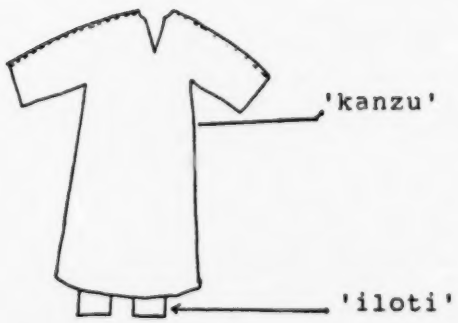

FIGURE 40. The 'kanzu' and 'iloti'.

FIGURE 41. Wide shorts.

FIGURE 42. Long shorts.

FIGURE 43. Boy in draped cotton fabric.

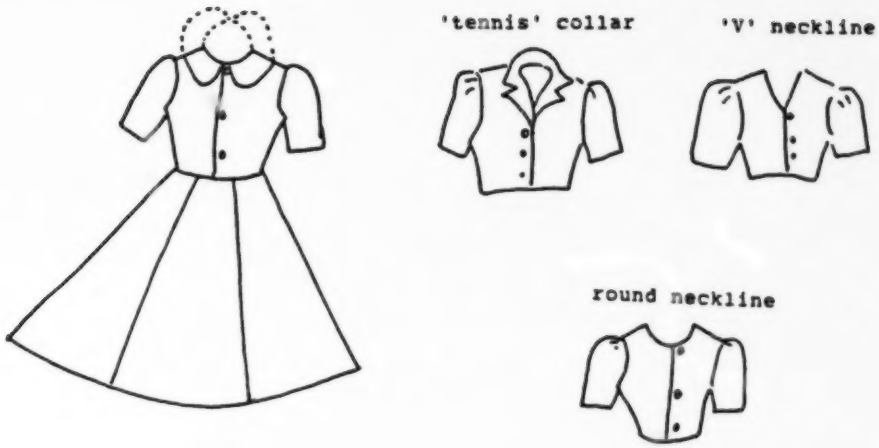

FIGURE 44. The 'marinda' dress.

FIGURE 45 a. The 'korea' dress with 3 point neckline.

FIGURE 45 b. The 'korea' dress with 'saw' neckline.

FIGURE 46. The 'indege' dress.

FIGURE 47. The 'ndege round' dress.

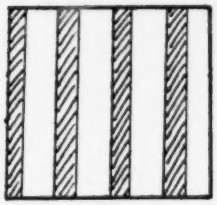

FIGURE 48. The 'makunguru' fabric had black and white stripes.

FIGURE 49. The 'koka kola' or coca cola dress.

FIGURE 50. A scarf knotted over one ear.

FIGURE 51. The 'katana' suit.
Courtesy of the Maloba family.

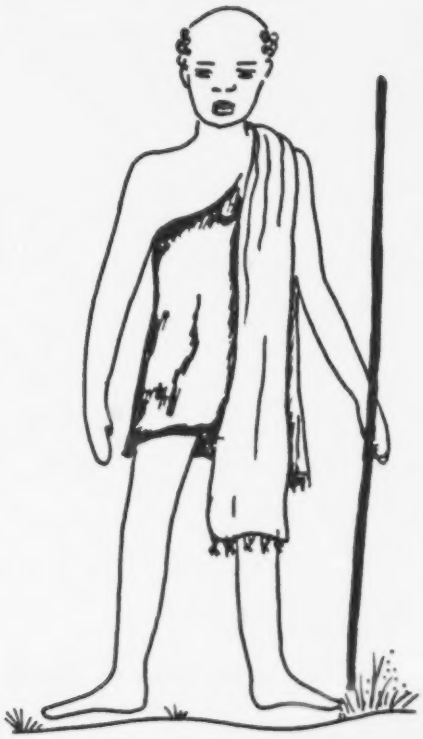

FIGURE 52. Elder's (male) dress 'lisero' and blanket over one shoulder.

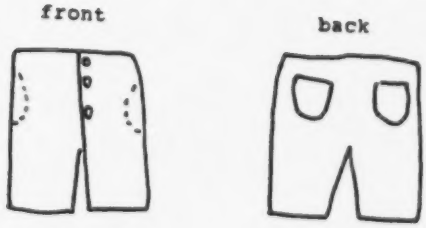

FIGURE 53. Flat shorts.

FIGURE 54. Shorts with side pockets.

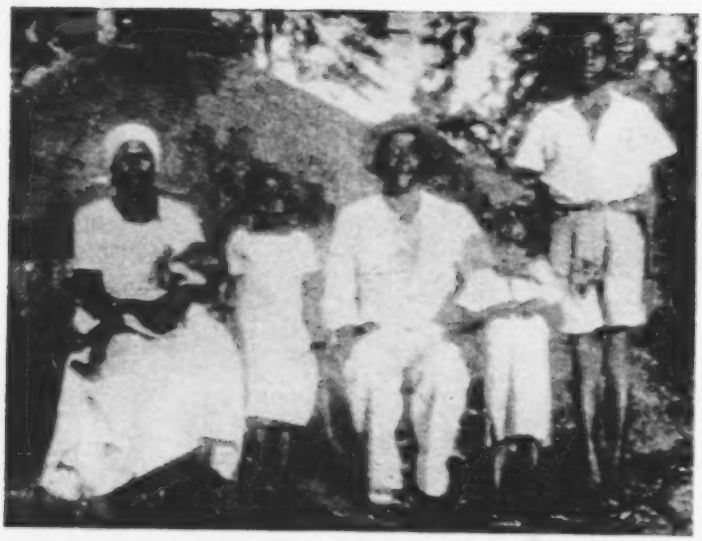

FIGURE 55. A family photograph c. 1940. The boy on far right is wearing the school uniform of Maseno Sector School with a badge on the shirt.
Courtesy of the Maloba family.

Figure 56. Girl's school uniform.

FIGURE 57. The 'queen mshika tumbo' dress.

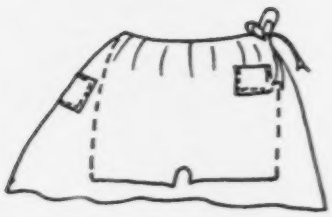

FIGURE 58. Women's underwear.

FIGURE 59. The 'madirisha' or 'windows' dress.

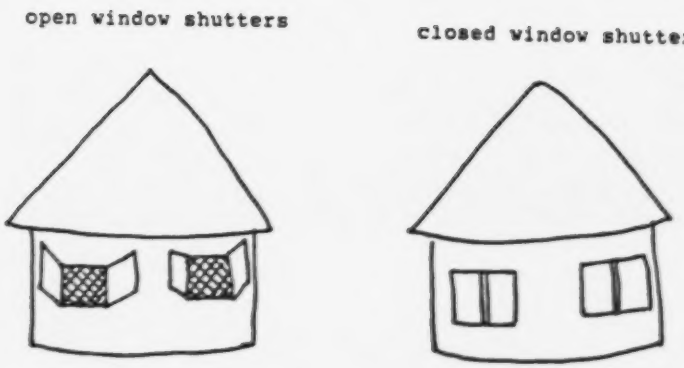

FIGURE 60. Open and closed window shutters.

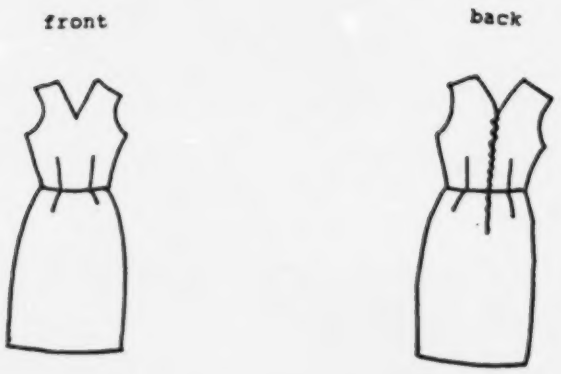

FIGURE 61. The 'tight' dress.

FIGURE 62. Shirts with collars and cuffs.

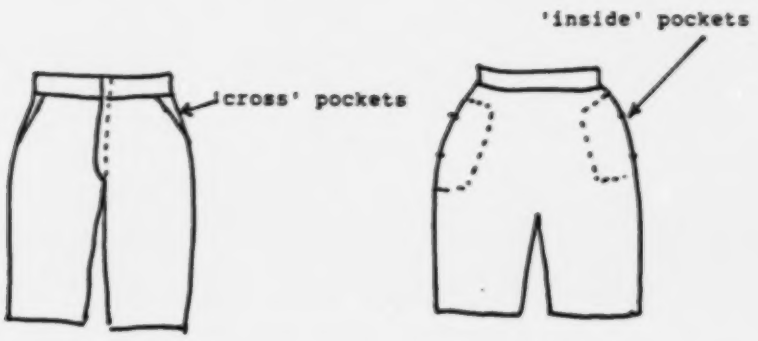

FIGURE 63. Tailored shorts with 'cross' pockets and 'inside' pockets.